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Cheer-up Letters

From a Private with Pershing



TORREY FORD

CHEER-UP LETTERS

FROM A PRIVATE WITH
PERSHING

BY

TORREY FORD

U. S. ARMY AMBULANCE SERVICE



NEW YORK
EDWARD J. CLODE

MP

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Printed in the United States of America

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A FEW WORDS BY HIS DAD

IF anyone read introductions to books, the writing of this one by me might be considered as rather a difficult piece of work: that is, one requiring nice discriminations of reticence and confidences, — all that sort of thing. But as the average reader has much more common sense than the publisher usually credits him with, he generally skips those first few pages impudently set up between him and the author and never bothers his head whether they're good or bad.

He is perfectly right. In most cases introductions are not worth while. At least, that has been my experience. If done by the author himself, it is often merely an excuse for him to get up on stilts, assume an exaggerated pose of modesty, and repeat something which he has said much better in

the body of the text. When the introducing is done by a third party, the result is seldom happy. If he insists enthusiastically that here is a book of great merit, he is apt to imply that unless you agree with him at once you're stupid. If he doesn't so insist — well, what is he there for, anyway?

True, once in a while, comes a book which seems to need a few words, either of apology or explanation or both. This appears to be such a volume. It is difficult for me to judge whether or no the material used in the following pages may prove sufficiently interesting to warrant publication in this form. I don't in the least mind saying that these letters, as they came to us — the "Dear Family" of the address — were read and reread with lively interest. When one showed up in the morning's mail, scribbled perhaps on a troop train or on the deck of a transport, or in a chilly tent somewhere along the French front — well, it was something of an event. Read them with interest! Why, on the mere excuse of a casual inquiry we have

been able to quote paragraphs, word for word, until no doubt many of our friends learned to avoid the subject. Still, there were others who always wanted to hear more. They said they did. You know how friends are.

So I shall not deny my own appreciation of these cheerfully written pages. You see, I've known the author rather well for some twenty odd years,—that is, I thought I knew him well. We never quite can admit the limitations of our understanding in such instances, can we? He has been rather closely associated with me, at least, for that length of time. Latterly, he has been put to that supreme test of having endured me for several seasons as a frequent golf partner. I don't care to count how many foursome matches he's dragged me through. Anyway, I owe him a lot on that score. Merely writing a preface for his first book will do little towards balancing the account, but it may help.

The fact that the author also happens to call me "Pop" to my face and "Dad"

behind my back we need not dwell on. It is mentioned merely by the way. You have the right to know. You would have guessed, anyway. Perhaps it may explain a certain forbearance in the golf partnership alluded to. And it gives me a standing as an introducer. Having established that, I may go on to say how these letters came to be written.

When President Wilson declared that a state of war existed between the United States and the Imperial German Government—that was how it started, wasn't it?—Torrey had been for several months acting as dramatic editor of the *Boston Traveler*. For a young man with barely a half year of newspaper experience behind him, it was rather a big job. But he liked the work and, much to my surprise, he seemed to be making good. And when a youngster has been drifting around somewhat vaguely for a year or so after finishing at college, that means a lot. He had found himself.

If you had asked me I should have said

that his military tendencies were null. Without being at all a mollicoddle or anything like it, he was distinctly a peace-preferring person. As a rule he was un-aggressive. The exceptions were when he was making a pitch and run approach shot at a critical point in a golf match, or when he was bidding his hand at bridge. He was expert as a side-tracker of wrath by means of the soft answer, and his Dad's inaptitude along that line often troubled him.

Probably he was as patriotic as the average. He never mentioned it. He was much too tolerant to harbor strong racial prejudices. His dislike for the Germans seemed to be no more pronounced than his distaste for boiled onions or early breakfasts. True, after the *Lusitania* incident, he always referred to them as Huns.

But the possibility of his ever becoming a soldier appeared remote. Wearing any sort of uniform did not appeal to him. The call of Plattsburg he ignored. His ways were civilian ways. I doubt if he had ever fired off a gun of larger caliber than a .22.

I am quite sure he had never looked upon a corpse, or seen a severely wounded person.

And then came the war. Early in the spring of 1917, if you remember, we hardly realized that we were in it. Very few of us, at least. Oh, something ought to be done about those Belgian and Armenian outrages, of course! The submarine horrors must be stopped. The Allies should be helped. But most of us were a little vague as to how it should be accomplished. Probably we would not be directly affected — not personally.

As for us, we made our usual plans for spending the summer in New England. It was Torrey who found for us a South Shore cottage three blocks from a golf course, one from the ocean, and within commuting distance of his office. We were all nicely settled and were looking forward to a quiet, peaceful summer as a reunited family.

He took us, as he had several times before, to the Harvard Class Day exercises at the Stadium. They did their best, that little handful of graduates, to reproduce the gay

and brilliant spectacle of former years. There was no lack of confetti and colored streamers. But although the June sun shone brightly, Mars scowled across the arena. Most of the few seniors present were in olive drab. Many were absent at training camps. Many of the recently graduated classes were not represented at all. The exercises were cut short. The slim crowd trailed out.

We had planned to spend the evening in the Yard. Half an hour of wandering past acres of vacant camp chairs was enough. Japanese lanterns had been strung, bands were playing. But the place was gloomy. Even the subdued carnival spirit which usually marks the end of Class Day could not be summoned. I suppose the Glee Club sang on the steps, no doubt there were the traditional "spreads." We did not stay to see. We drove home and talked about the war.

It was the next day, I think, that Torrey, after spending a few hours in Boston, came back with a new look in his eyes, a confident smile lurking in his mouth corners,

a livelier spring to his step. He was happy, all through. And after a moment or two he announced, —

“Well, I have a new job — with Uncle Sam!”

He had enlisted in one of the ambulance units then being organized by the New York Harvard Club. We learned that for some time his name had been on the lists of possible volunteers. He had joined by telegraph, taken his physical examination, and been accepted. He also admitted that months previous he had tried to get into the infantry, but had been refused because he was slightly under the minimum height. Two days later he was ordered to report for duty at Allentown, Pennsylvania.

It all seemed to happen quite abruptly, as if a great mailed paw had suddenly reached out and taken him away. Many family circles were having the same experience. We felt that, too. And we began to realize the necessity of it all. We knew now that this war was our war. We began to feel rather proud that it was.

We were entertained by his letters from the Ambulance Camp. It was interesting to note how quickly he adapted himself to military discipline, military ways, yet how persistent was his distaste for nearly every feature of it. I think he found answering the 5.30 A.M. reveille hardest of all. Next to that, the prevalence of stews in the menu. But he found humor in everything, even when a panicky junior officer diagnosed his mild case of tonsilitis as diphtheria and routed him out in the middle of the night to be marched off to the contagious ward of the Allentown hospital.

For several weeks he tried to assure us that the prospects of his being sent abroad were so distant as not to be worth talking about. He was quite sure that winter would still find him in Allentown. But late in July we learned from other sources that several sections had been fully equipped and might be sent over at any time. So we made a hasty trip to the Camp, arriving one hot Friday. On the following day we watched nine hundred of the men paraded

in heavy marching order and officially reviewed. Torrey was among them. Also he had just been given a forty hours' leave. So as soon as the review was over we all started for our summer home.

How he did seem to enjoy those few hours—driving a car once more, having a dip in the surf, a few holes of golf, and two real home cooked meals. And as he boarded the train back to Camp he insisted once more that this wasn't "Good-bye." "I'll have a real leave soon. You'll see." Forty-eight hours later he was on a transport.

He has now been in France since some time in August, 1917, having landed at a little seaport a few weeks after General Pershing's first forces disembarked there. The following letters describe fairly completely his doings since then. True, owing to the restrictions of the censor, he has not attempted to tell all that he saw of actual warfare. But that has been done by others who have seen much more and whose pens were not so restricted. Besides, you will please remember he is ever attempting to

convince a credulous family that war, as he indulges in it, is really little more than a somewhat thrilling outdoor pastime, rather healthful and not at all hazardous. Safe? Oh my, yes! He insists on this.

But aside from this well-meant camouflage, it seems to me that there runs through all the letters a genuine note of optimism which, if anything, makes them worth while. It may be only the generic optimism of youth. I would not care to say that it is peculiarly an American optimism. But it is very genuine. It never fails. Always he seems to be making the best of things as they come along — just as your son or brother is doing, or will do when he gets into the thick of the sad mess.

And with a thought that perhaps this cheerful view of war might bring a smile to faces where smiles have been few of late, I send these letters of Torrey's to the press.

Faternally yours,

SEWELL FORD

Cheer-up Letters

From a Private with Pershing

ALLENTOWN, PA.

Monday, Aug. 6, 1917, 10 A.M.

DEAR FAMILY:

WHEN I blew into Camp this morning at 5.15 A.M. the first fellow I met from our Section offered the information that we were ordered to be packed to leave at 10 o'clock; baggage to be ready at 8, and shoulder packs at 9.

I refused to believe, as usual, and went about the business of packing up leisurely and none too carefully. I sent some one down for the sweater you left at the hotel, bought a money belt, and got everything into my barracks bag by a miracle. I made a skinny roll to carry on my back, folded my cot, packed the suit case for Walzer to

express home, and gave him dope about the telegrams to you.

Now we are all ready and have answered roll call. My guess all along has been that it is just for practice. In fact, I have wagered to the extent of \$3. that we don't leave today. Even at the present moment, with the majority confidently expecting to be on board in a few hours, I am doubtful. You will have had a telegram before this telling you whether I was right or wrong.

As for leaving now, I'm hoping it's true. We couldn't leave at a better time for me. I've been home and had the very best time I ever had. You can't imagine how I did enjoy every single minute of it. I hope Uncle Sam will have sense enough not to keep me too long away from such a wonderful home and family. If I missed the things you were going to send, they were mostly luxuries anyway. And I think you can send things over to me.

If you do not get any other address write here to Allentown and it will be forwarded. The Postmaster said that everything — let-

ters, papers and packages — would be forwarded to us.

I had an easy trip through, slept from Boston down, after a milk toast dinner in the diner, got on board the Allentown train at midnight, climbed into an upper, and slept like a top until quarter of five. Had breakfast down town and made in at the gate at 5.15. And I feel like a king now.

It's getting toward 11 o'clock now and the fellows are beginning to get leery about our leaving today.

Lucky I took that 5.10 out of Boston, as the Federal Express was late and missed connections.

I'll remember every minute that I was home. If it was my going-away party, it was the best anyone could ask.

It is now nearly 3 o'clock (p.m.) and we have been given no further orders. I'll send this off and write the outcome later. I have a feeling now that maybe they will march us off late this afternoon. A fellow in the Q.M. Dep't. said our stuff was labeled Pier 1, Hoboken, but that may be rumor.



ALLENTOWN, PA.

Monday night, August 6

DEAR FAMILY:

I GUESS it is true we are going and I am thrilled to pieces. Just as I was ready to believe it was all off the trucks backed up at 2.30 and took our luggage. Then we were assembled and told to sleep in our uniforms tonight, not even to take off our shoes — equipment under our cots, and when

the order comes, to march out quietly. We are expecting it about midnight. I couldn't imagine any more exciting way of leaving.

I think we'll go right to the transport and maybe sail out around dawn. If you don't hear from me again you'll know that's what happened.

It may be weeks before a letter can get back. But I'll cable if they let me — just "Arrived."

I don't see how I can sleep a wink until the order comes.

I have everything I need, even to some asperin and seidlitz powders. They paid us today which gives me an even one hundred dollars to start with and I'll keep plenty for an emergency.

Wasn't it perfectly fine that you came on, and that I could go back with you, and that we could all have such a good time together?

And I am glad to be going.

Write to Major Yale here at Allentown for our address. And send other letters

to me here, "care Section 12," to be forwarded to France.

Loads and loads of love from

TORREY

...

*(Telegram from Allentown, Pennsylvania,
August 7)*

Torrey Ford left last night, presumably for transportation.

G. W.

...

EN ROUTE. 1.30 A.M.

*(Marked on the envelope: "From a soldier.
Please mail.")*

...

Tuesday morning, August 7, 1917

DEAR FAMILY:

IT was thrilling and spooky. I was wakened from a sound sleep by Asher Hinds whispering excitedly in my ear: "I think they're calling Section 10." Scufflings in

the darkness, with an occasional gleam of a flashlight. I glanced at my watch. It was only eleven o'clock and the first thing I thought of was the three dollars I'd lose if we got out of the gates by twelve.

An N. C. slapped me on the shoulder and whispered, "Outside." Before any of us had really rubbed our eyes, we were outside, as you saw us equipped Saturday, and the cots folded up. The first march towards France was single file down to the Quartermaster's Department to turn in our cots. I suppose if there hadn't been a full number of cots or anyone had tried to smuggle one off to France in his vest pocket, we'd have quit the war until all had been receipted for by the Q. M.

Then we hiked over to the mess hall — coffee, orange and three ham sandwiches — which was more than anyone needed or expected.

Only here and there a sleepy-eyed group of fellows were up to see the doings and call "Good-bye." Everyone spoke in whispers. Commands were given so softly that you had

to watch your neighbor and do what he did — and you halted by bumping your chin against someone's haversack.

Section 11, the Harvard boys who didn't go, watched us leave the barracks and almost wept. We all hope they'll join us soon.

We assembled in battalion form on that plot of ground in front of the mess hall. The simple order came to "Forward march," just as it always has been given, and we passed out of the gates at 12.25, which made me three dollars richer by a pretty slim margin.

We turned to the right and halted. I heard an engine whistle, and right there, one block away from Camp on a side track I never knew existed, was a long string of cars with two big engines.

There were, perhaps, twenty-five people, including a few mothers who came scurrying up to say good-bye. They must have camped outside the gate and waited. I much preferred the way we said good-bye at North Scituate.

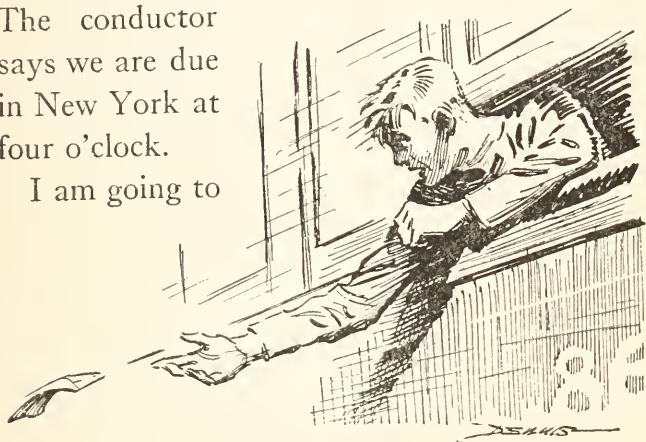
As we boarded the train, still with whis-

pered commands, I thought of the Spanish War soldiers as they left Hackensack. The new way of leaving is lots easier on the emotions.

We got into a comfortable day coach and pulled out in a few minutes. It certainly has been efficient management so far.

After a few songs and a little excitement, most of the boys have settled down to sleep. The conductor says we are due in New York at four o'clock.

I am going to



try to toss this to someone to mail when it gets light.

A "comfort bag" which was given out late Monday afternoon I have stuffed full of food. I have to carry it in my hand. Got

by with it in the darkness and should be able to carry it on. The pockets of my cartridge belt are stuffed with cigarettes, matches, and medicine.

Don't feel badly about the things I didn't take because every inch of my packing space is taken.

We are going through Easton now and I'm going to try for some sleep.

Gee, I'm glad I had that night and day at home!

(Written on a picture post card)

6 A.M. Tuesday, August 7

WE are on board a ferry bound for the transport — still thrilled. Rumor has it that we will probably stay on board down the harbor somewhere for a couple of days before sailing. Everyone feeling fine.

This may be last word.

*(Written on a Western Union Telegram
blank)*

ON BOARD, Tuesday, August 7

ACTUALLY here and very comfortably located for the trip. All branches of service

represented. Just had fine breakfast with regular home coffee. Boat has good decks and recreation rooms. Even has several shower baths. Hope you got letter I sent from Jersey City. Had on back "From soldier — please mail." Everyone is very much excited. Don't look for another letter for month at least. Guess I won't need many sweaters until we have something besides this kind of weather. The piano is banging away, singing going on, and everyone is very happy. It's almost like a Cook's tour.

...

(Cablegram, dated Paris, August 31)

Safe, well.

(Signed) FORD

...

(Received September 11, 1917)

AT SEA

DEAR FAMILY:

WHEN I finished reading the censorship regulations, I decided that if any letters were ever to pass through, they would have to

be limited to the weather and personal hygiene. So far there has been plenty of the former but very little personal hygiene. Until today, each day has been a little more wonderful than the one before. The sea was never glassy, but hardly more motion than a ferry ride across the Hudson. It's been so warm that we hardly wore a sweater, except occasionally evenings. There hasn't been any moon to make us sorry when the call came to go below, but then there isn't even a Red Cross nurse to go with a moon. We've had to put away the pipes and cigarettes each night as the sun dropped into the ocean, but it is worth it just to see her go down and tint up the clouds.

Today we woke up to fog, a little mist, and a choppy sea. But no one seems to care, as the other days were growing monotonous.

So far, there's been little chance to find out who were the sailors. About one out of every twenty has fed the fishes and recovered.

There isn't anything about travelling on the ocean that I don't like, and you can imagine that this trip has its thrills. Of course, it is a bit tough not to have a brass bed stateroom, nor be invited up in the Captain's room for bridge — but it is something to camp down on the lee promenade deck and play poker from one mess bugle to another. It is funny that I should know the Captain. He asked about Donald and if I still had the *Marion*.

Each day we have an hour of exercise just to keep from growing too soft. There are occasional details of work that everyone tries to duck but really enjoys doing. Day before yesterday I spent in the mess hall, dealing out food to the flocks of hungry soldiers as they came by with their kits. I expected to starve, but the food has Allentown skinned in every way. And how we do eat!

Of course, no one thought to bring candy except some of the boat's crew. Two days after we sailed a five cent bar of chocolate was quoted at somewhere around thirty-five

cents, but there were more buyers than chocolate. I figured that I had four cigarettes a day for the trip and that was more than many had. But after a while someone remembered that the Post Exchange back at Camp had packed a box for each section. We found the boxes down in the hold — with eighty-five dollars' worth of candy and tobacco for each section. That helped things along a lot, but chocolate hasn't dropped any in price.

Mixing in with the regulars has been interesting. They call us the "hospital" and don't seem to mind when we take more privileges than they dare.

The majority are eager to land. I could stand a lot more of this lazy life. The ocean is certainly bigger than I ever knew it before. No one seems to have the slightest idea what we're to do when we do get there. Everyone hopes to be stationed right in Paris for the rest of the war, but likely they have other plans for us.

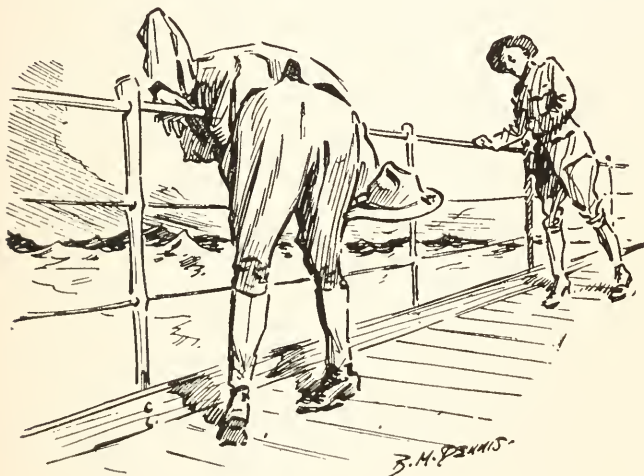
It is rather a relief to have everything planned for you and never to take the least

responsibility. We are even told how many times to bathe and when to wash our teeth. When they had underwear inspection the other day, I thought it was a bit too much.

...

ANOTHER DAY

SINCE I wrote, we have had a southeast rainstorm, a glorious cold October day when



everyone wore all their sweaters, and now summer again. There's hardly a person aboard who isn't ready to see land now. Because nothing happens. The poker con-

tinues, so do the dried peaches, and someone doesn't answer a roll call — but there's nothing more to help us remember that we're alive.

We have official rumors now — and just plain rumors — that float from one end of the ship to the other, telling when and where we land. Probably someone knows — but no one tells.

Our mathematics shark notes the changes in time and one day figures we are one thousand miles away and again that we have already arrived. His deductions are lengthy and amusing.

The daily change in time is the one big event of the day. Wrist watches at best are none too accurate, and trying to keep them in harmony with the ship's bells means the grandest turning of hands from sunrise to sunset. The "dough-boys" are a little scornful of wrist watches. I don't know what would happen if they saw our swagger sticks.

Someone who wasn't a math. shark figured that every match lights one hundred ciga-

rettes. One lighted cigarette serves as punk for everyone in sight.

There is lots about the trip I'll have to save until I get back. It is all so new and interesting that I'll probably remember it all.

It looks as though mail service between North Scituate and me would be anything but speedy. If cables don't run too high, I'll try and send over a word occasionally. But if letters don't come too often there are probably a thousand ways of their getting lost. I might unconsciously let slip some valuable military information and the censor would do the rest. The field post cards won't be interesting but they stand the best chance of getting through.

I'll land with ninety-seven dollars in my pocket and thirty-six dollars more coming the first of every month, so I'm not worrying any financially.

I've learned to count up to ten in French and am trusting to the honesty of the merchants for the rest. We have various volunteer interpreters and Asher Hinds has

promised to stay by my side. My six years of German will probably be as useful as my year of botany.

Salt-water shaving is my latest achievement. With marine soap, it isn't so bad if you are careful and the ship doesn't rock too much. The daily salt-water shower is refreshing but crowded. I found someone scrubbing my foot the other morning.

The most encouraging part of the trip has been that we all know each other a lot better than we did in Allentown and have banded together into a very friendly crowd for whatever we have to go through. I could hardly pick a better crowd of fellows for it.

. . .

ANOTHER DAY

It's about noon and we are quietly drifting into port. When we sighted land a few hours ago and finally came into quiet water, it was probably the happiest moment in the lives of everyone on board. We've had enough entertainment lately to please

anyone who objected to the monotony. All the moving pictures I've seen that had submarines, destroyers, airplanes, and steamers couldn't match it. It seemed to me just like watching an exciting ball game, where you win in about the fourteenth inning and everyone rocks with joy and relief.

And now we're here! The air is buzzing with airplanes, the water is dotted with small sails, funny colored. We've passed a few foreigners, who waved. The little tugs dip their colors as we pass.

I'm as curious to land and see it all as the greenest greenhorn. Nor do I look forward to the impatient waits while the officers decide where and when we shall go.

A fishing boat just went by with a red mainsail and a green topsail!

My address will be

U. S. ARMY AMBULANCE SERVICE

Section 12

U. S. EXPEDITIONARY FORCE.

That is all that is required. No country is allowed because you aren't supposed to

know who we are at war with, I guess. Wherever the letters are mailed, they are forwarded to New York and sent on to the proper place. Probably this will have been mailed in New York, too. I'm quite sure that the mails carry post packages.

I'm going below now to pack up a few things and then will come the long wait for the order to go ashore. We're said to be two miles from the dock at present.

Loads of love and don't do any worrying for a long time yet.

. . .

August 27, 1917

DEAR FAMILY:

WHEN your letters came into Camp this afternoon, it didn't seem so far away after all. They were the ones you wrote the day we left. And if this one doesn't take over twelve days it ought to reach you about on Hazel's birthday. It has taken me three days to get a cable off, and even then the agent thought it would be several days before it could get over. It seems

there are a few other people who want to send back the customary "safe and well."

There have been a host of censor regulations added lately, and I've figured out that you can really keep better track of me through the papers than by anything I'm permitted to say. But when I have a chance to get near a cable office, I'll send something occasionally. It only costs eight cents a word.

Landing in a foreign land was just as interesting and thrilling as I knew it would be. And this is so foreign. No one understands English, and my French doesn't seem to penetrate. I have learned to say *un bière* and *vin rouge*, but when I dickered with a peasant woman for doing my washing, I fizzled miserably. However, Ted Wall and I got a whole lot of stuff washed and ironed for three francs, sixty centimes.

We are near a town and get in twice a week to patronize the sidewalk cafés. But out around Camp are several regular or converted places to eat. Most of the farmhouses and small chateaux have arranged

eating and drinking gardens and all along the road are stands with fruit, candy, and cakes. And I thought food would be scarce here. You ought to see. You go into a restaurant where the sign says three or four francs and they keep you eating for a couple of hours steady. They begin with cantaloupe and hors d'œuvres, omelet, fish, meat, vegetables, cheeses, fruits, coffee, and wines. And then the Madame will apologize for having so little in war times!

Saturday and Sunday we had practically free. We went by train a two-hours' ride to one of the large cities. Every bit of it was interesting. Ted and I got tangled up in a compartment with some French people. Of course, they wanted to converse with *l'Amerique*, but we couldn't get started.

Then we had luncheon on the diner. Perhaps the New York, New Haven and Hartford couldn't learn a thing from the French on that point! A delicious home meal was served to everyone at once.

And when we came to our destination,

I distinguished myself by stepping from the car without hitting a single one of the steps. It certainly looked like the first wound of the war with the blood smeared all over my elbow. As the train pulled out, a French lady tossed out a lace handkerchief to bind it with. And then to a pharmacy where a funny little man put on the most elaborate bandage "for America." It was only a skinned elbow at that.

We had a gorgeous time hunting around the city, and every step I thought how much you all would enjoy every bit of it. American soldiers were a strange sight to the people. They would stop and stare and gather round us when we looked in a window.

The pastry shops we enjoyed the most. They have the old Café Martin *patisserie* beat a mile. I passed up the chateaux and cathedrals and wandered in and out of stores. I can see no sign of war-stinting anywhere.

The streets are full of soldiers, home on furloughs or wounded, — soldiers of every

nationality. Practically all the women are in mourning.

Sunday I went back to the city again and enjoyed it even more. Such a dinner!

Every day we have a chance for wonderful bathing. The weather is about the same as we left in America, hotter at mid-day and cooler morning and evenings. Today is sort of September-like, a cool breeze and a little rain.

We are all fixed so comfortably and everything goes with such efficiency that I have some idea that the needless sufferings of other wars are not to be repeated. It's been great — all but that doggone 5.30 reveille.

You better start making plans to take the first boat when peace comes. It will be worth it.

I can buy almost everything I could possibly need here except knitted goods (helmet) and your letters.



August 28, Somewhere in France

DEAR FAMILY:

EVERY once in a while I get civilian-sick. Today is one of these days — when I'd just like to drop out of the Army for a few hours and be just a plain ordinary citizen. But most of the time I'm glad I came. There is so much worth while, so many thrilling moments, and the hardships aren't hardships at all, — just inconveniences.

It's a gorgeous day, with one of those crisp fall winds and I certainly would give a lot to get out on the golf links and bat the ball against it.

Yesterday we spent a domestic day in the barracks as it rained hard all day. With a fiddle and a harmonica going on at one end,

a poker game at the other, and Savage, our big barber, working in the middle, there wasn't anyone who could say we didn't look like the picture of contentment. I poked my nose out just three times during the day—to run up to the mess tent for some food. Our cooks seem to be catching on pretty well and dole out three "squares" that would content anyone.

About the only things I'd like to have you send me are newspapers and Fatimas. It's rather tough to be cut off from all news except the single sheet that the Paris New York *Herald* sends around, and the French cigarettes are punk. If it is possible, I'd like the *Traveler* and *Tribune* and an occasional bunch of *Clearwater Suns*.

Everything that seemed so strange and foreign to us when we first came we now take as a matter of course—the scenery, the people, and their crazy language. No one has yet mastered the intricacies of the money or its American value. Each time you buy anything, they pass out enough

change to sink a ship, but hardly worth carrying around.

I am expecting to see Guy Walzer almost any time now. But he will have been so long on the way he will probably have forgotten all the American news he started with.

I'd like to send Hazel a birthday present now, but am going to wait until I find out just what we can send back parcel post.

We are using Paris time, with its daylight-saving device of one hour, which isn't very practical at this time of year. It means we get up while the stars are still shining. I believe it changes back after the first of September.

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August 30th

DEAR FAMILY:

I TRIED to eat up all the pastry in France on one day, but now I am again a normal, sensible person. We are having snappy weather, gorgeous days for our hikes out through the beautiful country. Some of the quaint little villages are deserted and should have a sign up: "Closed — everyone gone

to the war.” The mornings and evenings are cool, but during the day it warms up to perfect weather. We get up in the middle of the night and go to bed before twilight is over. It certainly is time to stop this “daylight-saving” device. It doesn’t work. The August moon is quite as wonderful as at home, only it’s rather rough not to have any joy-rides or Gloucester hammocks. I can imagine how nice it is at Scituate.

Four of us went into town last night and nearly bought out the shops and still we had a few million centimes left. Mostly we bought food. Prices are certainly crazy — a great, big bunch of celery costs five cents, while a measly little towel can’t be bought under half a dollar.

Yesterday we rummaged out in the country and found some big, ripe pumpkins, and today twenty-four pies are waiting up at the mess tent for us. The fruits here are fine. They have a peculiar canteloupe, more like our cassaba which goes well for breakfast.

No more mail since that one batch — with

the two letters you thought might catch the transport.

Guy Walzer not here yet. Am hoping we will get within range of Doc. sometimes.

I certainly am pleased that the American Field Ambulance men are to be taken into our service or sent on back home to be drafted. I hated to think of them with their steamer trunks and sporty uniforms, while we are to do the same job and be plain, ordinary privates. I am wondering how many of them will go on with it, and if Davidson will be persuaded into it.

I wish I had been admitted to Hazel's first aid class last winter. We are having the same thing now and you can guess how poor I am at making a bandage.

Yesterday we hiked to an interesting French resort. It had the usual assortment of women, but rather a decrepit lot of men.

Our command of the French language is being extended in every direction. I heard one fellow with a great deal of assurance announce in a restaurant that he wanted:—

"Dose kafe oh la la!" And when the Madame didn't seem to understand, he showed it to her on the book:—*Deux cafés au lait*.

Tomorrow is muster day and the next day pay day, and we are all wondering how many francs we get to represent thirty-six dollars.

Don't forget about the occasional Fatimas and the newspapers. I think they will come through. Otherwise we are all very comfortable and pretty much contented.

. . .

September 2, Sunday

DEAR FAMILY:

I AM getting to feel less and less like a soldier and more like a picnicker, because we certainly are having a corking good time these days. Take today, for example! They didn't let us ramble off too freely, as they did last Sunday, but, with our Lieutenant and the entire section, we took the train to a nearby summer resort. It was a gorgeous day and we had a wonderful time,

just such a day as that last one I had at North Scituate. Ted Wall and I had dinner at a fashionable hotel, splendid meal and wine for one dollar, and then we had coffee served out on the lounge overlooking the sea. Ted and I were the only Americans there. There were many interesting English and French of the usual resort type.

After a great old hop on the beach, we went in bathing in some pink-and-white bathing suits. The water was warm, with nice gentle waves. We wandered around the shops for a while, buying jams and fruit, and then took the train home.

You couldn't imagine more perfect weather than we are having. As there was too much boisterous celebration in town, they are keeping us rather closely in camp, which is a good thing. Yesterday we had a Harvard-Yale baseball game which attracted considerable interest in Camp. Harry Le Gore, the Eli football hero, pitched for Yale. He is with the Marines. We had Frye, who pitched when I was in college. We won 4-2. I shouldn't be surprised if

the Harvard-Yale football game would be pulled off according to schedule over here.

We are making things more homelike every day. Ted and I have a dining room table and the best bed of hay in France. Our impromptu carpenters have built a poker table, benches, etc. Probably by the time we get the barracks provided with bath and hot and cold water, the order will come to move on.

The coffee gets better every day and last night the cook celebrated by turning out one hundred doughnuts. Almost every day someone else discovers that he can't eat all the pastry in France.

We all read Wilson's answer to the Pope with approval. I certainly will be glad to see an American newspaper.

My French improves not at all. I learn the words but can't pronounce the pesky things. However, I get along very well making signs with my hands.

Tuesday, September 5

DEAR FAMILY:

I SUPPOSE these letters will all bunch up and land in North Scituate in a little bundle. But I guess the only way of making sure of getting anything through is to write a lot. I hope you all will write often too, for mail boats must come pretty often.

Yesterday we had to keep reminding each other that it was Labor Day in America. Everyone had something to say as to what he would be doing if he were home. I guess I'd have been working, with a Monday and the theatres just opening.

Otherwise, we paid no attention to the holiday. We had a corking hike out through the country behind our long-legged Captain, and by the time we got back to our barracks, everyone was panting. But after I'd had a cold shower and a big plate of beans for supper, life seemed lots better.

I certainly am glad I brought along my heavy bath-robe. Getting up these chilly

mornings while the stars and moon are still bright in the sky is anything but a pleasure. I shiver until the sun comes up to warm us. But it does come up pretty strong.

I'd like to be helping celebrate Hazel's birthday today. As far as I can remember, it is the first September 5th I have been away from home. Almost every other holiday I've missed except that and Christmas.

Maybe I'll have as good luck about Christmas this year as I did last. I have a feeling that things will sort of swing that way.

Today two letters came through from New York to our section that had been twenty-two days en route. I think they will make better time than that after the system is organized. Those were just casual letters. The whole section has had just that one bunch of letters from Allentown. But we are hoping for some luck any day now.

Have not seen Walzer yet. We have the same batch of daily rumors that we had in Allentown and most of them mean about as much as they did there.

September 7

DEAR FAMILY:

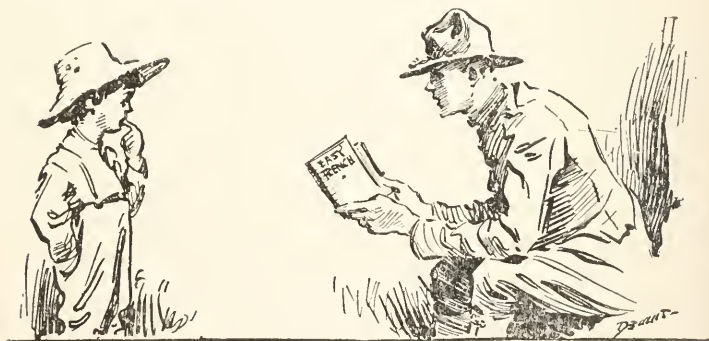
THERE hasn't been enough doing in the last few days to even form the foundation of a letter. Incoming mail has dodged all around us without coming near enough. Today three packages and two newspapers dated August 10 came into our section and there were semi-official rumors that two hundred bags of soldier mail would be distributed tomorrow.

I have learned to wave my arms around in the air as a windmill typewriter. They call it semaphore and probably it is useful, but it makes me feel like a Boy Scout at play. Some time that we are devoting to French lessons is rather more in my line. I wish I'd studied it with the same eagerness in college.

Tomorrow I'm going to put on those becoming blue denims and see if I've forgotten all I don't know about the insides of a Ford.

The weather has softened again — even so, I can sleep in pajamas and have no dawn regrets.

Today was pay day. Each man came away from the Quartermaster's loaded up with something like two hundred francs. We couldn't reckon how much it was in American money, but we felt like millionaires. And it will all go for tobacco, jam, melons, and other food. All we think of is something to go in our stomachs. I guess it is the "exercise in o—pen air" that gives the abnormal appetite.



The last two days we've been too busy for French, for calisthenics, or even for casual letter writing. Have been doing

everything from high class twelve-hour stevedore work to swinging a pick. Even Sunday wasn't observed as it should be.

But today I got hold of some American tobacco and I don't care what happens. From a captain, I got four hundred cigarettes and some pipe tobacco. Also a New York Sunday *Tribune* dated Sunday, August 12.

The food has improved to meet a day laborer's appetite. Too tired to write more.

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September 13

DEAR FAMILY:

I'VE had indirect word from you, although my mail hasn't come through yet. George Smith in Section 10 had a letter from his father telling of Pop's inquiring about my arrival. You can't imagine how that little news cheered me. I'm glad you heard and sorry the cable couldn't get through sooner. I had four *Tribunes* forwarded from Allentown, last date August 10. The package will probably come later. Others have had

them that were sent just before you sent mine.

The stevedore job continues, unloading everything from coffins to canned milk. Our back yard is full of Henry's, the envy of every other outfit in camp. We begin to look more like an ambulance corps.

We've had ten days of beautiful summer weather, but they are issuing the woolen underclothes and overcoats just the same.

I long for news of the war. We are too close to the tape to know anything. Today's *Herald* carried word of a "peace feeler" from Germany that sounded encouraging.

My letters will have to be brief from now on because of the amount of censoring. I'll fool them and write oftener. We are growing more into a little family in our section every day and having some fun out of everything. Write often and when they once begin to come in, it will be fine.

(Written on Y.M.C.A. stationery with the heading: "On Active Service with the American Expeditionary Force")

September 14

DEAR FAMILY:

THIS morning I'm taking a little vacation — if you don't take one for yourself, they don't happen. So I shaved while the details were being wished. And it is a fine morning to rest — with the rain pattering gently on the roof. It's almost luxury.

A Base Censor has been established again in Camp, which does away with the Company Commander holding up mail until he has time to get through it all.

Yesterday, on the stevedore job, we had an interesting group resting off where smoking was permitted. There were a dozen of us in blue denims, as many German prisoners, an Armenian, several Frenchmen, and a bunch of New York darkies. The air was blue with the mixture of languages.

We are to be with the Allied Armies for a time at least and I am hoping to run into the Doc or even Davidson.

The Government doesn't care what you

write or send me, so do tell everything that is going on at home and send clippings and pictures of bathing parties, etc.

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Friday, September 21

DEAR FAMILY:

IT has been a whole week since I've written and such a busy one — but the most enjoyable week since I enlisted. We are no longer in a crowded camp, but off by ourselves in the wonderful country. We are quartered in a farmhouse, really as guests of the American Red Cross at a place they have been using as a base for equipping and training the American Field Service men. We have French women cooks and I suppose we are getting regular French rations. Anyway, it is great stuff that is served up regularly three times a day, even to the *vin rouge* that we can't get accustomed to as a necessity. Our pretty little courtyard is jammed with Ford cars. Each driver has his own car to take care of. Touring in a flivver had no new sensations for

me, but the country we passed through and the fun of being part of a column of American soldiers in a foreign land was distinctly different from the New York to Christmas Cove grind. In nearly every town the women lined the streets with baskets of fruit and flowers.

I drove our first sergeant at the head of our section and came through with just one puncture at a fortunate luncheon stop, with, of course, the proper daily attention to the commutator. Never toured with such a carefree mind, for always in the rear came mechanics, spare parts, and good advice. We made occasional stops and the men were given opportunity to visit cathedrals, etc. But my idea of sightseeing is to jump into the nearest grocery store and buy all the food in sight. Toward the end of our run we were reviewed by several colonels and an odd major or so. Old Henry would have swelled up with pride if he had seen the way the flivvers stood the test.

We are so ideally located now that I know it can't last long. We have our own lieu-

tenant and a most cordial French officer. The weather is ideal and we are all as happy as can be. I'll have to save more for another letter.

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September 25

DEAR FAMILY:

THIS has been a wonderful day! After weeks of hoping and waiting around for the mail man, someone went in and stirred things up and brought back half a car load of precious letters. I had thirty-five, including those you have written from August 9 to September 11. It made me feel just like a new person to establish connections again with my world. I read the letters in chronological order and thus pieced together all you have been doing since I left. It was the most joyful party I could ask. So many times I've sat and wondered what you were doing and felt so terribly far away because I couldn't know. You can't imagine the relief at having first-hand information — one letter that was written only two weeks

ago. And your news was all so cheerful and interesting.

I'm afraid my letters aren't going to help much. You seemed to have gathered more accurate information about me from the outside and from guessing than from anything I could tell you.

Your letters are not censored and any packages you may send will come duty free and will be treated as first class mail. All I want is Fatimas, smoking tobacco, a few warm socks, a helmet, — and newspapers. Everything else I can get here. We seem to be in a land of plenty, especially food.

We are still having our happy little farmhouse-party and I am enjoying the country more than it seems fair in war time. Beautiful country and gorgeous summer weather still. Sunday night, five of us had a regular home dinner at a nearby café-roadhouse; a big roasted chicken, French fried potatoes, salad, pie, and champagne, — all served in a typical country dining room by a bright-eyed Belgian girl. It was the first meal

I've had in France that tasted anything like home.

We see few people except an occasional peasant, various inspecting French officers, now and then an airplane buzzing on its way. At present I am driving the Lieutenant's car and also making his bed and



bargaining for his laundry — but we won't dwell on that part of it.

When I do get into service, don't worry about me, because there seems to be little danger in the work we are to be assigned. And during the winter there isn't much to do and we'll hope for peace in the spring. I know just what our work is to be — exactly

what the Field Ambulance men have been doing — and I guess if hundreds of them could come through without a scratch, I'm small enough to slip by.

I'm enjoying it all more than I ever dreamed and pretty nearly happy at times, especially now that I know everything is going well with you.

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Wednesday, October 3

DEAR FAMILY:

HONESTLY, there is so much to write about, I can't tell it all intelligently. But I'll just blaze ahead as I remember things. Being with the French army now, we aren't subjected to such rigid censorship — for they realize we don't know anything important.

At present we are in Camp some ways behind the French front waiting for orders to go forward with some division.

To go back to last week, at our farmhouse Camp, about as far from Paris as Clearwater from Tampa (thirty miles): I was selected

to drive the staff car, and so far it has turned out to be the best job in the section.

None of us had seen Paris, even though on our trip across the country we passed within eight miles of it. But last Thursday the Lieutenant got an order to appear at the Paris headquarters and I was behind the wheel with a smile. We pulled into the big town about 10.30 in the morning and I didn't blink my eyes for the next twelve hours. Paris probably is worth a casual glance or so in peace times; but today, with officers and soldiers from all over the earth flocking the streets and cafés, it is dazzling.

Right in front of headquarters I ran into Bob Dort, from Keene, who had just landed from America. He filled me full of American news.

After a little business the Lieutenant and I went out hunting for a regular meal. We came into a place that might have been Rector's and ate forty francs' worth without stopping. More chasing around in the afternoon and back to "Rector's" for our

last meal before we went to the front. We finished just as the lights dimmed, about 9.30. We breezed out of Paris through pitch-dark streets without a light on the car.

It was some day for the staff driver! And he had to tell everyone of the other forty-five men everything there was to tell about Paris, even about the peach who washed her face and hands nonchalantly alongside of him in the restaurant wash room.

Friday we got ready to go up to the front, and on Saturday came the staff car, a little gray Ford touring car, loaned by the French government. And the French First Lieutenant, with a waxy moustache and a sporty cane in his little gray Ford, and a French sergeant and secretary.

Sunday morning we left. I hated to go because we had all been so happy in that farmhouse. The Lieutenant and I loafed along at the rear of the column. It didn't seem like going to war at all—just like touring at home. At noon we stopped for Sunday dinner at a little town.

Towards afternoon we began to realize that we were nearing something. All the towns were full of soldiers and along the roadside were encampments — men *en repos* (resting). All we knew was that we were headed for some big French automobile park where sections were dispatched to the front.

We came into the camp at 5.30, shut off the motors, and listened. We could hear it all right. It sounded like the 4th of July, — just a long rumble coming across the wheat fields. And then someone spied an airplane — and then another. Finally we counted eleven in one group, with puffs of smoke in the air. It looked exciting enough, and was — even though no one knew the score. While we were waiting, we discovered an abandoned trench and decided not to hurry towards enlisting in the infantry. It's too muddy.

The French Lieutenant, who had been up pow-wow-ing with the Camp commandant, came back with word that we weren't expected. So we made camp right where we were; that is, the men made beds in the

ambulances, the cook stove got busy, and it was home.

The officers were towed off down town to sleep in some bum farmhouse. I curled up in the tonneau on top of the luggage and slept just as though there weren't any cannons booming. The Lieutenant found me still asleep at seven in the morning. We drove back to the roadside camp for breakfast. They told us we wouldn't be given a division for a few days. So we arranged the cars in a hollow square, cook tent in the middle, and have as homelike a camp as you could ask. The Lieutenant and I have a big tent which we throw over the top of the car and stretch out to one side, giving room for one cot (his), one stretcher (mine), two bureaus (boxes), two chairs, a dining-room table (the step), and plenty of room to read the batch of New York *Tribunes* I found in Paris, forwarded from Allentown.

Monday and Tuesday we spent sight-seeing in the staff car; up to within five miles of the firing line, and every inch of the way interesting. We found American boys

galore — one camp with two hundred, all in the American Field Service, *camion* drivers and ambulance men. They've been here months and not a man even ticked by a bullet. Many of them already had been taken into the Army and others were going to enlist. The towns we passed through were practically deserted by civilians, and soldiers quartered in all the houses, — one village of Algerians. On all sides it was the same comment, — "Nothing doing." Days and days of loafing around waiting for calls.



Then we went to a city that has been shot up and is still within range of the big Bosche guns. There was the usual bombed cathe-

dral, the wrecked and partly demolished homes, but a few stores still doing business and the streets full of soldiers.

I've got to run now to take a couple of men over to the dentist, but will write more this P.M.

. . .

October 9

DEAR FAMILY:

AFTER having hit most of the steps along the way, at last we have arrived near the front and near enough to be interesting, but not near enough to be shot. It's near enough!

We are quartered adjacent to a field hospital. The ambulances carry patients back to various larger hospitals. Another section brings them in from the *poste de secours*. It's lazy work — only fifteen cars have been out today — but in times of an attack I guess they'll all be working.

The Lieutenant and I have a tent to our-

selves. Some of the men are in a wooden barracks, others in tents, and a few timid ones in improvised bomb-proof affairs.

This is the fourth night up here. The very first night I slept just as soundly as at home. Yet the artillery is working within a couple of miles. The days are mostly quiet, but at night the bombardment is continuous. I've learned to distinguish between the "arrivals" and the "departures." Once or twice I've been near enough to hear them whistle.

I'm tickled to pieces with my job as driver of the staff car. Everything that is interesting to see, I see. The Lieutenant is very companionable and congenial. We have lots of business errands and yet save time for sightseeing and running into a near-by town for shopping. There are several good stores in the part of the town that has been left from the bombardment.

We buy bacon, eggs and butter, jam and canned stuff, and over a little alcohol lamp cook up enough to supplement the regular rations. Last night's dinner was our star

attempt, with fried eggs, bacon, French fried potatoes, and steak, wine, etc.

We've made our tent pretty comfortable — with blankets around the side to keep out the cold.

The summer weather has deserted us. We've had five days of rain, but the sun came out today on a beautiful fall day.

The airplanes came out in hordes with the better weather. I saw a flock of sixteen going over the lines together.

I'm glad I know how to drive a Ford. All roads leading to the front are just like Fifth Avenue — packed and jammed with traffic, with a gendarme every few feet. There are long trains of *camions*, every kind of ammunition truck, troops, limousines and touring cars with officers, and every kind of horse-drawn vehicle.

Have to run now. More later. Am very much content over everything — Fatimas and sweet chocolate.

October 12 (*It ought to be Columbus Day
but it ain't*)

DEAR FAMILY:

GENERALLY it rains and occasionally it pours. Today it's the latter. Maybe it's the heavy bombardment that causes the ructions, or possibly the Lord wants to sicken the nations of war. Anyway, our tent doesn't leak.

We have a real tent now. It's nine feet square, head room all around, and keeps out everything but the cold. It's cosy as you like up until 7 P.M. After that we duck under the covers, with cigarettes, matches, and a few last August *Sateveposts* within reach. In it we have all the comforts of home: an improvised ice-box, kitchen stove, dining-room table, etc., — and a door-mat without any "Welcome." With all our possessions scattered about there is room for the Lieutenant and me to navigate and that's about all.

And take it all in all, I'm just about

as content being right here at the front as any time since I enlisted. Every day I do something interesting and all that humble feeling of being a private has vanished here. The Lieutenant and I are just as good friends as if we were on a camping trip together. We drive somewhere every day and always include a town to do some shopping.

Yesterday we drove around to several different hospitals looking for a place for one of our men with bronchitis. We found a wonderful chateau affair, with English nurses, and today he is established there with all the luxuries.

This morning a bunch of officers blew in from Paris. There was a little old major, an occasional captain, and a half dozen lieutenants, all in the medical corps. They hadn't seen any war except in cities and hotels and wanted us to show them the front.

We started out from our Camp, two car loads, with one of the boys who knew where a battery was hidden up in the woods, as guide. After a while we got out of the

cars and followed the guide up a muddy hill — way, way up.

We came out on a little plain. There wasn't a soul up there or anything in sight. We pointed out the German lines, — a little speck off in the distance because it was misty.

At first they were thrilled over it, but when nothing happened they began to crab. They wanted to see the front, and here we were four miles or so away from the Germans. The guide couldn't find the battery and it looked like a pretty poor party. We felt kind of sheepish, too, because we'd expected to thrill them, but it seemed as if the war had been postponed on account of rain. The officers took off their helmets and started back down the hill, crabbing about the guide.

We'd hardly gone twenty steps before there was a vicious whistle behind us, something sailed over our heads, and we saw the shrapnel burst in the village below. One more followed and then it was quiet.

I looked around and there was the little Major crouched against the hillside. He

knew he was safe there and wouldn't budge. The other officers found various places to crouch and no one complained about not being near enough to the front.



A Frenchman said we'd drawn the fire by our group on the hilltop. The Lieutenant and I were tickled to pieces that the party had been a success — only the Germans shouldn't be so careless about shooting. They might have hit somebody.

And all that happened in a rainstorm.

In the afternoon we went to town and found the only thing in France that's cheap. It was a *Satevepost* — dated September 29 — that sold for twenty-five centimes, which is something less than a nickle when you figure it out in American money. Also I picked up a copy of the Paris edition of the New York *Herald* and read how the World Series had been on for several days without our knowing the scores. Nothing about the war except the official communiqué, and still I don't know whether it's all going to be over for me to be home by Christmas.

When we came back to the tent there was a little batch of American mail for me. Perhaps I wasn't tickled. The box you sent to Allentown hasn't found me yet, but probably will, and I'm glad some Fatimas are on the way. Cigarettes of any kind are so scarce here. You might send some very heavy stockings (socks) — I can't seem to find any here.

Hazel's clippings were most interesting about Paul, Charlie Peabody, etc. I was up visiting the boys in the Lafayette flying

corps the other day. They told me that a Campbell had been lost the day before, but I had no idea it was the dancing "Court."

That is absurd about not being able to cable except important messages. Several of the fellows have had them. They are called week-end cables to soldiers, with a special rate of something like eight cents a word. They come by mail from London. They told us we couldn't send anything but important messages, too.

Except for cables, I think it would be safer for you to keep my first address as the correct one. The U. S. Post Office in Paris seems to have learned where we are and will forward things promptly. We might be transferred back to the American Army and the French Army wouldn't know where we were.

There are Americans all around us. Boys in the American Field Service running ambulances and trucks—they're a fine crowd and most of them have joined the Army by now. We never see any of the regular American Army, although we know where

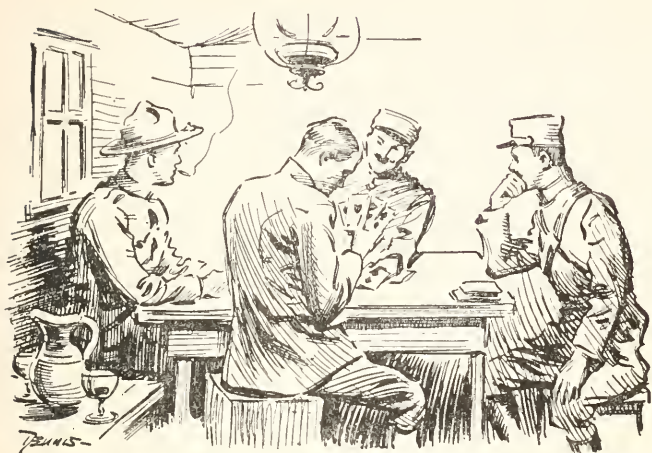
they are. Winthrop Faulkner, I heard, landed in the same place we did and went into camp there temporarily.

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Saturday, October 13

TODAY dawned bright. The first real sun for days. Everything is out on the line drying and everyone is happy. The Lieutenant has gone off to a luncheon party and I have a day of ease. None of my work now is hard or unpleasant. Just driving the little Ford and having a good time.

Last night we "made a bridge" with the French Lieutenant and French Sergeant. They played pretty well, but my Lieutenant and I are thinking of taking them on tonight for a few centimes a point. They don't talk much English, but have some unique expressions. After he'd gotten a game tucked away, the French Lieutenant said, "Now we must make a ceiling," which probably meant "run up a few hundred above the line."



When our section goes back *en repos*, the Lieutenant and I are planning to drive down to Paris for a couple of days. It would only take about three hours. And when our ten-day furlough is due, we're going to head for London, where we won't have to make signs at the bar keeper.

Today I had a splendid dinner of roast beef, baked potatoes, jam and wine — and it's warm enough to stretch out in the sun and take a snooze, which I couldn't do.

The hospital next door has hot and cold showers we can use if anyone feels that ambitious.

I can go to my tent door any time and look out on several roads, each one of them jammed full of traffic — all to keep things going on the march to Berlin.

I could be perfectly content here if you could all occasionally drop in and see how safe and comfortable I am. It is about as safe a service as I could be in and still maintain my respectability in military circles, — and it is a great experience.

• • •

October 14

DEAR FAMILY:

MORE American mail came in this morning! Pop's letter of September 25, which is some speedy, some packages for some of the fellows, but none for me. It certainly makes me feel comfortable to know that things are all going well at home.

The Philadelphia boy's description of the

naval battle (submarine attack on transport fleet) had a good basis of truth, but was highly colored. Personally I didn't see a single U-boat, but the way the shots were ringing out from every gun made me sure they were there.

The U. S. papers may tell nothing of the troops, but there is little to tell. They're just here and in training. I guess we're the only ones at the front and that's just to train us to work with American troops and help the French along a little, too. Don't think of me as dodging shells on a dark road 'cause I'm not. Instead, I'm playing bridge with the French and picking up a few francs an evening. Last night it was 7 francs, 60. I drive only when the Lieutenant wants to go some place and except for that little escapade on the hill — which you bet won't be repeated — we never see a shell. Nor do any of the boys, and we are all looking for a quiet easy winter. Why, of all these American boys around here, I haven't heard of a single accident.

Today is a nice warm day — about a mid-

September day. We intended to go to town, but the mail arrived and postponed all other activity until afternoon. Then the Lieutenant and I will run over — a twenty-five-minute ride — and practise up our bum French trying to buy nails, another lamp, some eggs and a little bacon.

It may sound foolish — but next to American cigarettes, American candy is the most necessary thing on the battle field — such as chocolate creams, etc.

The airplanes are busy today. Two German planes just passed high over the lines and we could see the shrapnel burst in the air that the French anti-air guns sent up. There's a big French observation balloon that goes up near us in fair weather.

I must shave before lunch — which reminds me, will you send a couple of dozen safety razor blades?

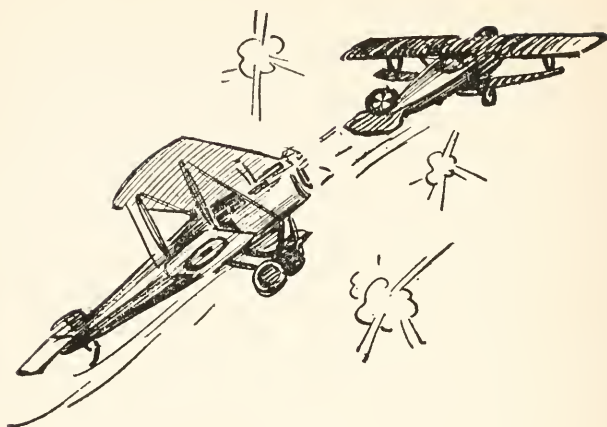
(Postmarked Soissons)

October 16 — Tuesday

DEAR FAMILY:

MORE cheering in camp! Yesterday the package you sent September 15 from North Scituate came and every single thing in it was just about as precious as any jeweller's display. The chocolate and Fatimas got the biggest ovation in our tent; next the newspapers and magazines — and the sweater and helmet were certainly welcome. I slept in the helmet last night. This morning I found a thin coating of ice in the water-bucket.

The package was in excellent condition and came right through after the letter telling about it. It made me feel so much nearer to America to have real American things right in my tent. If it isn't much bother, send things often, because I can appreciate little things like magazines and chocolate more than I ever dreamed possible.



I just heard some noise outside and went out to see the prettiest air battle in the clearest sky. A German plane came over our lines, high up. Every anti-aircraft gun on this front seemed to open up on him. We could see shrapnel bursting all around him, as his plane darted in and out among the white puffs of smoke. A dozen French planes went up after him but I guess he got away. Now the German batteries have opened up on the French machines. The fellows all stand in the yard and cheer. It's still going on, but I've broke my neck watching.

Yesterday we saw a damn Bosche come and puncture an observation balloon just two miles from camp. It was just a blazing mass that came down through the clouds. It must be a thrilling life up there.

I guess I didn't explain very much what our work is here. We are right on the grounds of a big field hospital, several big



canvas buildings. About once every hour an orderly comes over and calls, "*Une voiture*," which means that one of our ambulances cranks up and carries some *blessés* back to one of the other hospitals. It's easy work — ten cars on duty every twenty-four hours. The boys are never under actual shell-fire, but there are plenty of interesting things to see and hear.

We are making things more comfortable every day. We have branched out in the cooking line to include some swell sausage.

We are having cold mornings and nights and beautiful warm days. No autumn foliage over here. We play bridge every night now. Last night I won every rubber for a total of 7 francs, 25. The Frenchmen call a game a "sleeve." The French Lieutenant is almost childish over the game, he likes to play it so well. And when I carried him along for two winning rubbers last night, he almost kissed me goodnight!

I haven't had much chance to write this last week — but lots of opportunity to see War from every angle. There has been a

big attack, an advance, a host of prisoners and all the details that go to make an "eight-column streamer-head" story.

It's interesting and doubtless there is more at stake, but taking it all in all, I'd prefer to watch even a o-o Harvard-Yale football game. And yet from the week's work I have enough adventures to tell of to fill a winter of evenings, and enough mud caked on the bottom of my Ford to supply a brick factory.

Before the attack, during the artillery preparation, we scouted roads to the various posts where the section might have to work.

"Artillery preparation" were only a couple of words to me before. Now they mean the biggest word there is for bang, multiplied all about you and happening infrequently enough to catch you off your guard. I'd see a big gun upon a hillside, get ready for the shock — and a cannon eight feet from the car would go off with concussion enough to wreck any regular automobile. But our Henry pulled through

without any casualties except a split top. That happened one evening when I was trying to slip by a battery of railway guns in the semidarkness. We wore cotton in



our ears after the first day and almost liked the noise.

It was one rainy morning that the boys were called out to the posts and we knew the attack had begun (the French drive on Laon). Part way up the crowded roads we met the first German prisoners and we

didn't need the headlines to tell us how things were going.

For three days the Lieutenant and I were on the road constantly. Back to camp for meals and for a night's sleep — which was more than most of the fellows got.

The greatest stunt of all was walking over a fresh battlefield and into the German trenches of twenty-four hours before. The first corpse I came on, I sort of glanced at casually out of the corner of my eye. But later I grew bolder, and even came back with a German bayonet that I hope never had killed a Frenchman. I could have had a car load of Bosche souvenirs, but I'll wait for further conquests to fill up my barracks bag.

What was left of the German trenches we looked over carefully. They had left everything from personal letters to Mauser six shooters.

Back at the posts, I renewed my "Sprechen Sie Deutsch" with the prisoners and learned many interesting things: That there were no American soldiers in France — their sub-

marines had sunk all the transports that had put to sea—and that the war would be over in January, victoriously for “Gott mit Uns.”

When I told him that I was an American, soldier, and that there were half a million others all through the woods poking shrapnel at his Kamerads, he gave a few sighs and maybe began to realize that Kaiser Bill might be fibbing a bit after all.

The whole attack meant work and some hardship for everyone, but it was fun—especially to be on the winning side.

Now we look for things to quiet down, and intend to dig ourselves in somewhere for a winter of ease and the best comfort we can make.

Already we are having a touch of mild winter and a little ice in the bucket each morning. Shower baths are growing less popular and anything more than mere face and hand washing is almost tabooed. I haven't had my trousers off for two weeks but have made a date for a shower next Wednesday.

I am growing fatter every day. Guess

it is mostly being my own cook and having lots of bread, butter, and jam on tap. Our private larder contains at the present moment some fifteen pounds of bacon, one pound of butter, a dozen eggs, four cans of Borden's milk, many jams, and plenty of wine. So you can see that, with the regular army rations, we are a long way from starvation.

We have draped blankets around the tent, installed a kerosene-oil stove, and with many candles and punk French cigarettes we are prepared to enjoy war as much as it is possible.

These bright moonlight nights we've heard various enemy aircraft going the rounds with their bundles of joy; but with a huge red cross decorating the barracks, some well-placed sand bag walls and the general run of luck, we are expecting to pull through until the moon darkens.

Lately I've had a few letters come in, but nothing later than that one written on September 25. These must have caught slower boats or found a too remote corner in some P.O. Just the same, they were

as welcome as though they'd come right off the press.

I had a postal from Mrs. Watkins, with a few words that I enjoyed. If you can persuade anyone into writing me, please let them know how much I would appreciate it, but mostly write me often yourselves. I can always be happy here if I know everything that goes on at home. Maybe the war isn't going to last as long as it is necessary to make people in America think. Maybe I'll have a game before the Bellair links grow up for another summer. I'm planning on it and almost confidently expecting it.

• • •

November 5

DEAR FAMILY:

IF this letter doesn't breathe enthusiasm, it misses its intent. We've done left the war behind us and are way, way back in safe and sane *repos*.

It seems to be the custom in the French Army to take troops back to some town

after a hard attack, — and with the troops we go, probably for a month. Of course, we didn't need the rest, but I've heard no protests. We're in a pretty little quiet town, not too far from Paris, and we don't care what happens up at the front.

And we're living on the fat of the land. I have a regular bedroom all to myself — a bed to climb into at night, windows to open, a mirror, washstand, and everything. The Lieutenant has the adjoining room.

We are the guests of a semiprosperous wine-merchant — enforced guests through the billet system. It's more luxury than I've had since that one Sunday at North Scituate, and if you could see the picture on the wall and the grandeur of the bed, you'd think it was luxury too.

The "lady of the house" serves us *petit déjeuner* (young breakfast) at eight o'clock in the morning, and the other meals we eat at random.

The rest of the boys are quartered across the street on the second floor of a new barn. The cars are arranged in a little park near-by

and we are *repos*-ing for all we are worth.

Driver of the staff car may not be such an enormous title to gather in the annals of the Great War, but just at present it suits me. All the privileges you could want and responsible for just one flivver and no more.

Day before yesterday, I took my car and wandered all over France looking for two trucks we lost on the trip down from the front. Had a wonderful time, stopped for luncheon at an inn in an historic town, and then in the evening drove to another city to meet the Lieutenant, who was coming up from Paris by train.

Today we were inspected by the General of our French Army. Great doings. Speeches and everything.

And this afternoon came the mail man, with *beaucoup* mail.

I had your letters, September 25 — October 4 — one from Uncle Torrey, Hazel, and several from Bee. I'm watching out for the packages. New York *Tribunes* have

started. Had a fine pair of socks from Frances Swift.

When my furlough comes — “permissions” they call them — maybe next month, I think I’ll go down to Nice for ten days. Railroad fare gratis. It’ll be warm there and maybe I can get in some golf and forget the Army. Paris is just a city and wouldn’t be my idea of a vacation. I wish I could slip off to Florida for that time. Darn this making war so far from home.

The Lieutenant has gone off to a dinner party with the General tonight and I’ve spent a happy evening alone in my room reading your letters. Now to bed and for the *Tribunes*.

I miss some of the comforts of the tent, but am content in a bedroom.

· · ·

November 7

DEAR FAMILY:

THIS living on the wine-merchant is *the* life. Take today: arising gently but firmly

at 8 A.M., ushered into *petit déjeuner* at *demi-huit*, dozing over October 7 Sunday *Tribune* in front of W. M.'s fire from later until considerably later; *déjeuner* at noon at the expense of our near army cooks, filled lamp and changed bum valve for good valve on front right tire. Otherwise remained by the fire during the afternoon. Dinner of roast beef and beans, and this evening I'm just going to rest up in the luxury of my bedroom. Not so bad for the army. I could stand a lot of it.

The *Tribunes* have been a treat. I read them as religiously as though they came fresh from the presses. The war articles in the Sunday are splendid, except when they predict peace in 1919.

Today's *Le Matin* predicts that the pro-Germans elected Hylan in New York, yesterday. It also recounted how the boys in the trenches even cast their vote, but I didn't see any polling place around our camp.

Tomorrow I'm going into Paris, ostensibly to help the Lieutenant bring out our

last month's pay, but really to celebrate my birthday.

When I first went up to the front I mailed several letters to you at the Civilian P.O. back in a town. They might have been held up. That was before I knew about the military P.O.'s. The French give us a splendid service, mail every day, but things are of course held up in the U.S. P.O. in Paris. The most exasperating thing is to know that parcels are waiting for you somewhere. Eventually they'll all get through, I'm sure.

I am suddenly beginning to learn French, despite everything I can do to stop it. Mine host comes in frequently and we have the grandest combat of words you ever heard. As long as there is someone around who speaks English, you don't even try to understand the Frenchies, but when you get marooned with the *Parlez-vous*, there is nothing for it but to *parler aussi*.

We are having some rain and fairly mild weather. The foliage has just passed the brilliant stage. The climate is about the

same as Washington, I should judge. I've never felt so consistently well as I do here. The Army must agree with me even if it doesn't with my disposition. I don't think I'll ever leave America again. We are more civilized in so many ways, and besides, I do like icewater occasionally.

And now I've got to shine up my shoes and leggins so I can hit Paris with all possible grandeur.

• • •

November 10

DEAR FAMILY:

I COULD drop into Clearwater this morning without any regrets at all. It's cold and rainy outside and I am glad I don't have to step outside the door. And in Clearwater I'll bet the sun is shining, with the old thermom. up around 85.

Anyway, I celebrated my birthday as per cable, gloriously in Paris. The Lieutenant and I went in on the morning train, shot through a little business quickly, and then devoted the balance of our time to modest

celebration. We started out to trail down an American bar and found a place where you could discard the *parlez-vous*, put your foot on the rail, and say: "Draw one!" Icecold, too.

Aussi, we indulged in a wicked game of pool, rode *ad lib.* in taxi-cabs, and had two separate banquets. Taxis in Paris are fully as cheap as I'd been told but hadn't believed. The meter starts at 15 cents and you have to ride a deuce of a ways before it jumps to 17 cents. Otherwise, Paris is New York to me. Such of the American soldiers as have the luck to be at war in Paris are swallowed up by the throng. You don't see many.

The restaurants are crowded with gay parties and the prices high. The only war economy I could see was that things begin to run out on the menu toward evening. You know — "We're just out. More tomorrow." But there wasn't any tomorrow for us. We caught a train home around ten o'clock and were entertained on the ride by a French colonel in our compartment.

He could speak two words of English, a little German, and much French. We could do the same in different proportions. The conversation waxed furious at times and by degrees became such a hodge-podge Esperanto affair that no one understood what the other two were saying, and only by strict attention knew what he was saying himself. I am rapidly losing control of the English language, but am thinking of taking up Italian as a pastime.

Yesterday there was no time to recover from Paris. Right after breakfast I discovered a "miss" in the Henry. With a little diplomacy, I ensnared one of the mechanics and stood by and "helped" while he took off the engine head to interview the phony cylinder. It was all about a valve that wouldn't seat — (which wasn't in my vocabulary before) — but it was noon before Henry was herself again.

We drove to town for lunch and a few errands. Visited some Americans in an automobile training school and had to answer more questions than we could ask. Such

as: "What does a trench look like?" "Why is a bomb?" etc.

Back to the room, where we did light-housekeeping for dinner. And then ten rounds of real slumber.

Today n.d. (nothing doing), which suits me very well.

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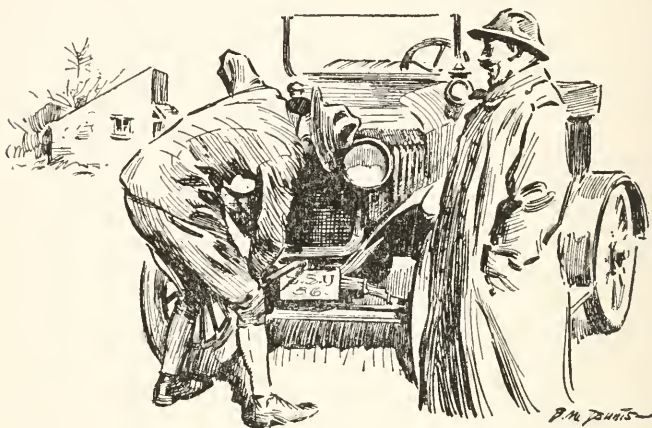
November 13

DEAR FAMILY:

THIS is a frosty morning — regular football weather. I have no longing to live in a tent. The tops of the cars are covered with frost, even though the sun has been up for two hours. Breakfast in front of an open fire was most agreeable. I take my morning exercise by cranking my Henry. I've used up my first supply of New York *Tribunes* and am looking forward to the next batch. Also, the birthday box, which must come in a day or so.

We had moving day here yesterday. The "nice" barn where the boys were quartered proved pretty breezy. So we requisitioned

a *salle de danse* down town and there they are entrenched behind a few wood-burning stoves. In the front yard, practically, there is a billiard parlor that is about as Frenchy



as anything I ever saw. We flocked into the place last night, took possession of the piano, etc., and spent a regular musical comedy, "war evening." That is, until eight o'clock, when French curfew sounds in all these military towns.

Today they began a series of twenty-four-hour permissions in Paris. Mine will come along in a few days and I'm going to try to do some Christmas shopping — al-

though the question of mailing things back is still rather vague. Most of the interesting things it is *verboden* to send out of the country. And it would be rather rough for you to have to pay duty on insignificant junk.

The arrival of the morning papers from Paris just interrupted me while I made considerable effort to discover the news of the day. The only bit of American gossip was something about an accord between Japan and America, for which I couldn't arouse enough enthusiasm to puzzle over the translation. Those eminent members of Congress who made the long trip to visit the three fronts somehow missed our camp. I might have suggested to them that if they'd give us more American tobacco and less American red tape, we'd make a better army.

By the way, our Greek top-sergeant has been deposed and we are now enjoying the reign of a Harvardized Californian whose only bad habit is chewing tobacco. "Minnie" Frye, who used to pitch bang-up ball for Harvard, is now sergeant of the mess.

He is meeting more difficulties than the Yale batters ever presented. But somehow things are running smoothly and the days pass on very rapidly.

I've got to go upstairs now, shave off a three-day growth, and be ready to chauffeur more or less officers around the country.

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November 15

DEAR FAMILY:

THE mail may do some queer things, but every once in a while it brings us very closely together. For instance, last night came a letter from Pop, dated New York, October 23. It was just after Hazel had heard from Bob Dort that I was driving a headquarters' car in Paris. Sorry you couldn't go on thinking that—but then, I've been just as safe as in Paris most of the time and don't expect any more front work this winter.

Enclosed is an account of our citation by the French Government. Of course, I don't deny having been brave, but I can't re-

member it very distinctly. It was a case of being in on a successful attack, after which everyone gathers far back from the lines and passes around congratulations.

*Mercy Workers
Win Renown
For Daring*

Two new sections of the United States Army Ambulance Service, Nos. 1 and 12, which are among the sections recently arrived from Allentown, Pa., for active duty in France as a part of the American army, have distinguished themselves by their fine work at the front, according to a letter to the chief of the United States Army Ambulance Service written by the French commander to whose service the American sections are attached.

Lieutenant John P. Bethel, of Section No. 1, and Lieutenant E. K. Moore, of Section No. 12, have been recommended for the Croix de Guerre.

The two sections were cited in army orders, and the French commander spoke in the highest terms of praise for their bravery and efficient work.

The United States Army Ambulance Service has about forty-five sections now on active duty, about half of which are Allentown men, while the others are the reorganized and militarized sections of the former volunteer ambulance services, the American Field and Harjes-Norton Ambulance services.

N. Y. *Herald*, Paris Ed., Nov. 14.

Aussi, I enclose, as war relics, if you like, two bills. One is from our host, the fat wine-merchant, for *petit déjeuner* and care of the room; the other, for our monthly wash. Don't confuse the *chemises* mentioned in the latter as anything feminine. They are merely shirts. 2 *caleçons* are common everyday underdrawers; 1 *sac* is the laundry bag, etc. Both bills are paid — so you needn't worry about them further.

Today the mailman outdid himself and brought me a package. It was the one with *beaucoup* Fatimas, life savers, khaki shirt, gloves, and a corking pair of white stockings. And I was just as happy over everything as any child at a Christmas tree. Package mail seems to run on a crazy schedule, but each day some few come through to various men in the section.

Lately we have made a few revisions in our feeding schedule and now have a corking system whereby we sit down to three "squares" per diem. We continue *petit déjeuner* at our official residence — and the

other two are taken care of by a woman who runs a café around the corner. She has lost her restaurant license since the war, but I buy the food and she cooks and serves for thirty cents a day for both the Lieutenant and myself. So far, each meal has been a dream, only I can't recognize the stuff I buy at the markets when it comes on the table.

We are having a pleasant spell of Indian summer — preparatory for something terrible along about Thanksgiving, I suppose, although the natives say snow is rare and zero weather never happens.

Orders from headquarters yesterday brought word that we are all entitled to ten days' furlough every four months, to date from the day of enlistment. That will give me twenty days of freedom between now and February 20. But you can bet I'm not going to use any of it up while we are comfortably entrenched with the wine-merchant. It will be more welcome when the snow is piled up around some barren shack nearer the lines.

I have more to say, but it's time to start for dinner.

...

November 20

DEAR FAMILY:

MY birthday box has arrived! I wish you could know how much fun I had open-



ing it and how I appreciate every single thing you put into it, from the crumpled-up *Traveler* stuffed in the bottom to Hazel's fancy typewritten list on the roof. There

was plenty of room in my barracks bag for everything that wasn't immediately consumable. There were so many things that have to do with washing the face and hands that I hate to confess that, behind the lines, we wash seldom, and at the front not at all. Possibly, when the warmer months come our habits will improve. The towels and handkerchiefs, however, came in the nick of time, for in my wanderings I have managed to lose track of most of those with which I started the war. The knife brings relief to a score of fellows who have been liberal with their own, and although I scorned an air pillow in Allentown, it is certainly welcome here.

The box came Saturday, the sixteenth, but I haven't been able to get a letter off before to tell you how happy it made me. With the Boston *Travelers* arriving and New York *Tribunes* and Clearwater *Suns* around me, it seems as though I had all the comforts of home.

I had a package from Bee in the same mail with her premier knitted scarf and a leather

trench cigarette case (although I hope to keep out of the trenches).

Yesterday the Lieutenant and I started on a long motor trip. Armed with a French road map and a weak vocabulary of questions, we wound our way successfully through numerous towns and finally came to the U.S.A. ambulance base camp at noon.

It was the same Red Cross base we had vacated two months before, but so different. When we left it was a quiet, peaceful farm, and we found it yesterday jammed with Ford cars, curious officers, and crabbing soldiers. Barracks, posted rules, and automobile parts littered up the landscape something awful. But we were "regulars" coming in from the front and they were amateurs getting ready. I answered more questions and told more lies during the course of the day and evening than I like to remember.

We loaded up a truck with supplies, annexed a rolling kitchen, swapped our gray Ford for a nice new camouflaged Ford, and came back to our own camp today.

I'm certainly glad that I graduated early from a cantonment. When you once get away from the crowd and under the command of one officer, everything goes smoothly and everyone is much happier.

I'm not worrying one bit about the hardships of a winter, for the French have learned to take care of their men and we fall under their care. They have given us big sheepskin overcoats with fur collars, and as long as we fight shy of the Alps, I know we will keep warm.

At present, the Lieutenant and I are having the best meals in all France. We had a regular Sunday dinner, with chicken, peas, beans, potatoes, salad, etc. — all the result of my expert shopping and an adept French cook.

I'm booked to go into Paris tomorrow — strictly for pleasure and no duties. Tonight I've got some shoes to shine up and two buttons to sew on.

November 23

DEAR FAMILY:

I JUST had a telegram from Hazel, saying that you were all well on November 11 — so I can be pretty happy in the present. Pop's last letter was dated October 23 in New York, and the next one should come soon, full of Clearwater news.

I'm just back from twenty-four hours of Paris, without much spirit for war. There were so many rumors floating around about our leaving that I was afraid of not getting in my short leave. But Wednesday afternoon things were quiet, and I said, at a diplomatic moment, "If we aren't moving tomorrow, I'd just as soon take a shoot into Paris tonight." While the clerk was making out a pass, I reminded the Lieutenant that there was an express at five, and why didn't he come, too. One of the boys drove us to an express stop station and we were in Paris by dinner time. Dinner, theatre,

and a luxurious hotel room passed along very nicely.

The locations (seats) in Parisian theatres don't cost very much, but every other step you have to tip somebody. I nearly broke up the show by not realizing that ushers are licensed to graft. But two English officers beside me made the same blunder. The programs cost forty centimes, but you don't get back any change — *aussi* when you buy a glass of beer in the lobby. Men wear hats until the curtain rises and smoking goes on freely. We went to the Alhambra, a variety theatre under English management. Two American rag-time acts brought big applause from the French.

The Lieutenant took the morning train back and I hung on for the day. I walked my legs off for two hours trying to buy a couple of Christmas presents, and all I finished up with was a *Saturday Evepost* and a New York *Tribune*!

Then I took a Turkish bath. And perhaps you don't realize what an accomplishment that was with my command of the language.

The idea occurred to me when I was walking down the Rue des Italian and I began to wonder what Turkish bath could be in French. Someone said "Good morning" and I turned to see an Englishman in a doorway, who wanted to be friendly.

He directed me to the "Hammen Bain." That may be the name of the establishment, or it may mean Turkish bath. "Bain" is "bath" all right, but I can't figure the "Hammen." It was what I wanted, anyway.

After a gorgeous steam, scrub, and massage, the attendant led me off, held up a canvas gate, and said something funny. There was a little water in front of me, so I took a chance and dove. Under a canvas wall and out into a sort of Paradise I came swimmingly. Another attendant met me at a landing stage, wrapped me up in blankets and carried me off to a gorgeous Oriental lounge. When they brought me a sherry flip, cigarettes, and a magazine, I felt nearer a civilian than for a long while. Here I spent three hours of my time in Paris.

I came back on a 6 o'clock train and was glad to find that the section hadn't moved. And now we may be here for some time longer. Twelve of the fellows have gone off on a ten-day permission. Some of them went to Nice and promised to bring back reports on golf possibilities.

We haven't had any winter yet, but the most frightful fog every day. The big British drive of yesterday has put everyone in good spirits. It was so different from our drive of last month, when there were weeks of artillery preparation until everyone from Berlin to Paris knew there was going to be an attack. But yesterday the English sailed right out into the fog before a gun had been fired, and kept right on going.

I think we'll all be feeling cheerful along about next spring.

I am getting fatter by the minute. One hundred and forty-three pounds with my overcoat on yesterday. All the fellows seem to keep in far better health than they ever did in civilian life.

But we don't like it, just the same.

November 24

DEAR FAMILY:

NOTHING has happened today and there's nothing to write about, but I'll drop a line against the time when there is too much doing for letters.

I've spent a day of glorious rest and three good meals. Sat in front of the fire and read all morning except for chasing down town to do the day's shopping. For luncheon we had some canned lobster with most delicious mayonnaise. For dinner — soup, steak, French fried potatoes, string beans, and chocolate éclairs. We certainly are getting the best meals in all of France.

This afternoon the Lieutenant and I breezed over to our near-by city for a few errands. My new car goes like a whizz. This is the most beautiful rolling country you ever saw, even in this late ugly fall. I heard a French regimental band — the first I've heard in the war. They were leading a procession of infantrymen, bound perhaps for Italy.

We ordered some turkeys for Thanksgiving dinner — although where we will be to eat them no one knows. I have a feeling we'll still be here.

My French is progressing by leaps and bounds. If the war continues long enough I may develop into a linguist after all. Not that I study the language or try to learn it, but being right with the French army, it is sort of forced down my throat.

I bought some films today and am going to take a few snaps that don't include scenery to send home. Several of the boys have smuggled in cameras, but it is pretty hard to get anything developed.

I should have been going to the Harvard-Yale football game today. It is a pretty warm day for the Saturday before Thanksgiving. Beautiful moonlight tonight and thank goodness we are far enough back so the *avions* can't rob us of any sleep. They are treacherous beasts up at the front, but everyone lives in caves or has an *abri* handy, so the victims are few.

It's quarter of eight and I'm yawning.

I get in eleven hours of sleep almost every night.

. . .

Sunday, November 25

DEAR FAMILY:

A BATCH of mail came today — some of that late mail that you don't expect but are so glad to get. Bee sent a clipping from the *New York Times* by the author of "Over the Top," who said that war isn't as bad as it is cracked up to be.

And it isn't.

Back at home, you have an idea that it is all terrible, and so did I. It is terrible to be away from home and friends, but that's very close to all of its misery.

You are only in danger when you're at the front, and even for the infantry that is a very small percentage of the time. With our work different individuals have had thrilling experiences, but the bulk of the work of the ambulance service is carried on over safe roads. Accidents can happen, of course, but they are so rare that no one

ever thinks about them as at all likely. And most of the time our work is back in *repos* towns. Such a small per cent of any one army can be at the front at a given time that all the little towns back are full of resting troops.

We are attached to a certain division of troops and go wherever they go. For instance, here we have one or two cars a day who go around to pick up the sick in the various villages where they are billeted.

It is the mystery rather than the fact of war that is terrifying. I wish you could see it all and know just what I'm doing. You'd feel lots better about it, I know.

At present, I am about as comfortable as I could be any place except home. The Lieutenant and I have become very good friends and manage to have some fun out of nearly everything that comes along. He is a Philadelphia doctor, forty-three years old, but just as congenial as anyone else in the section could be. We have long since forgotten all the military rot that was fed us back at Allentown. We have a machine

to go when and where we please and if we only knew just when it would all be over, we could be very happy in the present.

This has been a clear, crisp football afternoon. We got up a game of association football and played until no one had any breath left. Tonight is one of those gorgeous moonlight nights that makes me long for Clearwater.

Tomorrow we are sending a truck into Paris to buy up all the town for a Thanksgiving dinner. Tomorrow night we have two big fat quail for dinner. Our cook is named Madame Martin, and naturally we speak of her place as Café Martin.

Only in Paris do we ever see any sign that American troops are in France. I have the Paris edition of the New York *Herald* every day — but that has only an occasional reference to the troops.

You don't know how glad I am that I am here instead of in one of those camps in America. I was discontented almost every minute in Allentown, but here — never!

And not even a cold yet.



Wednesday, November 28

DEAR FAMILY:

AFTER one glorious day of sunshine, we settle back to the customary fog and mist. I hug the fireplace closer and closer and only stick my nose out for an occasional brief errand. Sometime last night a little snow flickered down but this morning there was only enough left for a single snowball.

I'm reading about the World Series, in some ancient *Tribunes*, religiously—and am just as disgusted with the Headless Hessian

for trying to shove Eddie Collins across the plate as if it had happened yesterday.

The dope of the war experts has an interest for me never born in America. In spite of all their wisdom and science, I have a feeling that peace is nearer than they dare suggest. Maybe it is because I want it so — but naturally every one else who is at all intimately connected with the awful war wants it just as badly.

I shouldn't be at all surprised if along about February Germany would have something to offer that would startle everyone. Things are so apt to happen in February — why not peace, *aussi*?

The Germans who are up in Russia trying to find out who is who will be frozen up by then, likewise those wintering in the Alps for Italy's benefit, and those on this front will have an awful premonition that the mythical American reinforcements are ponderous facts.

We are counting our days of comfort and luxury on our fingers, never knowing when our *repos* will come to a close. No matter

where we are in winter, it is bound to be *repos*, but without the hospitality of the fat wine-merchant.

But we are bound to have a good Thanksgiving dinner, for we took with a grain of salt the message that Uncle Sam would provide all his soldiers at the front with turkeys and bought our own, pumpkin pies and everything. We are so isolated from the American Army that they don't know we exist.

Last night the Lieutenant and I had a feast on a roasted rabbit. It was a new dish to me, but every bit as good as chicken.

Yesterday I discovered the most wonderful little chateau near here, a handsome old house set in about five acres of honest-to-goodness scenery. There was a little mill stream winding around, an island, many fir trees and an ivy-covered bridge. And out back several glassed greenhouses, a garden, and everything to make you feel like a prosperous country gentleman. A little old lady lived there alone with her servants. Someone said she'd be glad to get rid of the

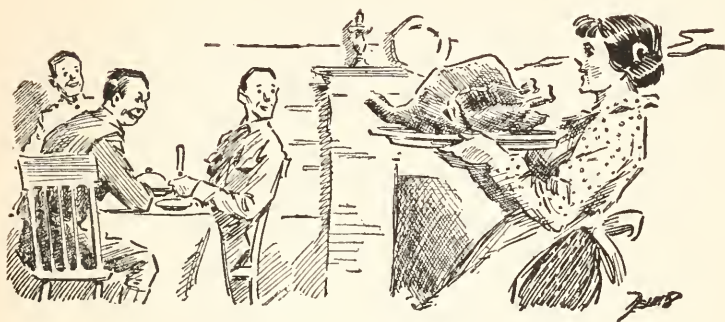
whole thing, including two dogs and the chickens for \$5000. I nearly bought an equity on the spot.

Today we are going to brave the rain and change our diet by running over to our near-by city for luncheon. It is 16 K. from here, which I have learned to know means about 10 miles.

If I ever learn to think in the French measures, weights, and monies, I'll be some intelligent. When they say a place is 60 K.'s away, I rapidly change it to miles; when I order a demi-livre of butter, ditto — and when they say 10 francs to me it means 2 dollars every time.

It doesn't look as though I'd be home for Christmas. Things have got to start happening darn quick if I'm to catch the Christmas boat. But then, if I was dramatic critic-ing on the *Traveler*, maybe I'd be just as absent.

Write often, because your letters make me so happy.



November 30

DEAR FAMILY:

WE had our Thanksgiving dinner all right! It went off with a rip and a roar yesterday along about 2 P.M. We sat down to a regular table — white table-cloth and everything — jammed up with all the kinds of food you can think of. The cranberry sauce was missing, but there were six big turkeys, with chestnut dressing, for thirty of us. So everyone is happy today and planning on a better Christmas dinner.

Just to whet up an appetite in the morning, the boys staged a football game out on an *ex-terrain de foot ball*. Despite the sea

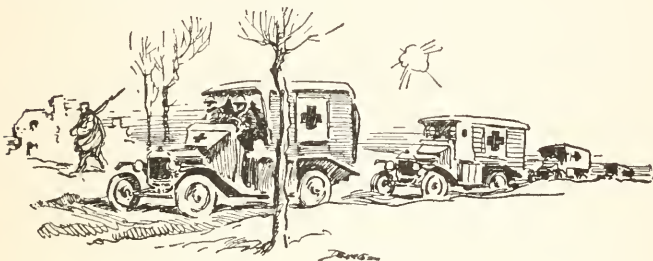
of mud, the "Low brows" beat the "Rough necks" 7 - 0. Meanwhile an increasing audience of poilus applauded, sympathized, and marveled, and wondered whatin'el Thanksgiving was about anyway.

Today I've spent the usual lazy day — marketing this morning, which has gotten to be quite an affair since the French Lieutenant has cast his lot with ours. Drove twenty miles this afternoon to see one of the boys in a hospital. He has an infected finger but the prettiest nurse in all of France, and so managed to keep happy. Had two large wheels put on the front of my car, and now it is only four o'clock, with nothing to do until tomorrow.

Here it is the last day of November and not a scrap of November mail has found its way from America into our camp. I was glad to have Hazel's cable and know that you're all well.

The Lieutenant and I have taken to cribbage in self-defence against these monotonous evenings when our reading matter gives out.

One native forecaster about here says we will only have a day or two of winter in December, and I'm willing to let 1918 take care of itself. Two weeks of January I am planning to spend in Nice, right beside the golf course.



Sunday, December 9

DEAR FAMILY:

I WISH you could see where I am writing from this morning. You can't describe it. It would sound too grand, or too grimy, and it is neither. If you only heard about the red-tiled floor, the beamed ceiling, and the big canopied bed, you'd picture me with a butler at the door and a few flunkies around the gate.

But it isn't true. We have the ground floor front of a peasant's shack, a highly cultivated manure patch in the front yard, and are feebly attended by a grandpa peasant who accepts a franc on all occasions. It's a toss-up between luxury and poverty, but we feel more at home than at any place along the line.

We are in a little village behind the front, waiting — probably waiting for Christmas, for I can't imagine any army brave enough to pull off an attack in this freezo weather.

It was rather a surprise when the orders came. We'd had other directions and were all ready to move only a few miles to a city nearer Paris.

Wednesday evening a messenger appeared from nowhere at all and early the next morning we were chasing back up toward the front. We made a perfect run, in spite of the leakiest bunch of radiators you ever saw. I traveled always behind the column and followed the course as easily as you'd trail a sprinkling cart. Outside a broken spring, a smashed radiator, and twenty odd

punctures everything went finely, and we were introduced to this town by daylight.

There's a cathedral here fully twice as large as St. Paul's, a half a dozen shacks, and a few barns. I haven't found out who left the cathedral behind or why, but they didn't leave much else.

The boys are quartered in a rather unfashionable loft over a shack. They've drained the gas and water out of the cars and settled down to wait and freeze.

We have a wood stove in our room that burns up as much wood as a blast furnace and doesn't give out any more heat than an electric fan. I spent most of the day between the wood-pile and the stove.

Yesterday we explored around for a city and found one within five miles. We came across a book store and laid in a stock of English magazines. With two oil lamps and many blankets, it looks as though most of our days would be alike.

We have a three-cornered bridge game, the two lieutenants and myself, that lasts occasionally until midnight. After a disas-

trous first evening, I am bidding modestly and collecting consistently.

I don't suppose mail will ever reach us in this remote corner of nowhere, but maybe they will hold it until they come up and thaw us out in the spring.

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December 10

DEAR FAMILY:

TODAY we declared a holiday for bathing purposes. The French lieutenant promised to steer us to hot water, soap, and towels if we would meet him early this morning. It seemed that he wanted a bath, too. I can't say that I wanted one so terribly, but I was willing to follow along just for the novelty of it.

We gathered, the three of us, something after nine, each with a little bundle of clean underclothes under his arm. Lieutenant Moore and I had both shaved for the party and had caught the holiday spirit. It's funny how you can work up enthusiasm for most any little thing over here.

The French lieutenant had never bathed in this particular part of his country, but he had a first-hand rumor that such a thing was possible in a city only eight kilometers away.

We found the city all right, much more of a city than we have been within striking distance of before. It even has little trolley cars and some civilian population. Surely it should have a bath-tub.

The first civilian in the big open square, we held up with a chorus of:

Où sont les bains?

He nodded: *Oui, oui*, and pointed down a side-street.

And there was an old building, announcing in big letters: *Bain*. We drew up in front with joyous confidence, gathered our clean underwear and made for the door.

A similar sign, posted prominently, had the glaring letters: *Fermé*, and a lot more French that meant the baths were closed but would be open all days of the week except Sunday afternoon and Monday.

A passerby suggested that there was

another *bain* on another side-street. We found it also *fermé*. Just why France should discourage bathing on Sunday afternoon and Monday I can't imagine, but accept it along with the meatless Mondays and the sweetless Tuesdays.

Anyway, the clean underclothes are back in the barracks' bag and it may be spring before we have another streak of sanitary enthusiasm.

I did a little shopping — bought an automatic cigarette-rolling machine (which is now for sale), a flash light, and the *Chicago Tribune*. Buying the last was worth while just to hear the newslady try to pronounce Chicago.

French newspapers, including the Parisian edition of the *Herald* and the *Tribune*, are *pas bon*. They cost three cents and have only four pages week days, and two pages on Mondays and holidays. The *Clearwater Evening Sun* could come to Paris and put them all out of business. I showed a Frenchman a copy of the *New York Tribune*. When he saw it had fourteen pages and only cost

one cent, he was ready to pack his bag and start for America, where you can live cheap.

The weather here is distinctly wintry. The sun may come out for a few bright warm moments each morning, but along about noon it gets cloudy and everything freezes up tight as a drum.

Last night an American lieutenant from another section came over for bridge. We played nine rubbers and nearly froze our feet. In the middle of the game a message came in warning of a Zeppelin attack. I went out and looked. The air was full of airplanes, but you couldn't see a thing. We decided we were just as safe around the bridge table as anywhere.

Six more fellows have gone off on permission to Nice. But I'm waiting until we get into such a terrible hole that I'll be glad to have a ten-day absence.

No one knows why we are here now, and no one seems to care very much. We can hear the big guns rumbling and we do a lot of imagining, but nothing like information helps us out.

It is getting so near Christmas I hate to think about it. Anyway it will be 1918 soon, and maybe the war will be over.

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Friday, December 14

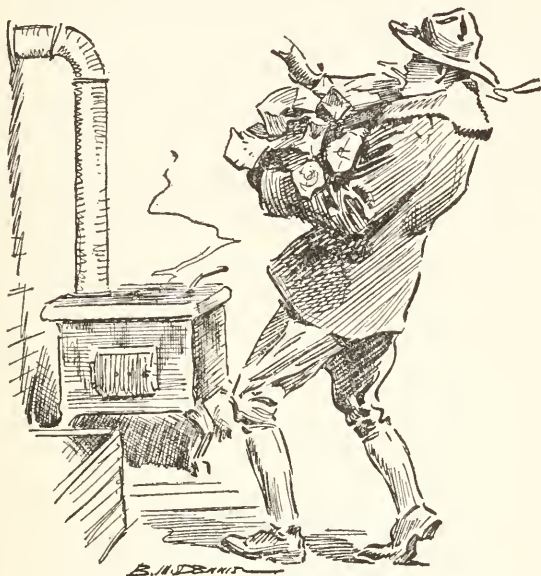
DEAR FAMILY:

STILL I am keeping one eye on the German *avions* and the other on the mail truck. But nothing happens to disturb the daily routine of this queer, semi-soldier life. It seems that we broke all connections with the outer world when we came up here.

I am waiting to hear about all the Sea Ora gossip, the Harbor Oaks scandals, and the golf yarns. Send pictures of everything. The last American newspaper I saw was dated October 25. Still I don't know what New York thought about Hylan's election.

We are having a pretty comfortable time here and passing the days rather quickly. I spend most of the day trying to build a fire with green wood. Generally, I get it going about dinner time. While we are at dinner it all burns out and we play bridge

in a cold room. But we wrap our feet in blankets, light two lamps and three candles,



smoke like everything, and have a hot game till midnight.

Usually we "lay late." There is nothing to do but curse if you do get up early. Our bomb-proof shutters also protect us against any possible morning sun and it is pretty easy to stay under the covers and dream.

It was nearly noon this morning before I faced the shivers.

Yesterday we were wakened by a knock and a casual message that the Chief of Service was in town and would presently review us. Here we have been out on the field for three months without even so much as a telephone message from a superior office, and inspection catches us in bed. It looked like a catastrophe.

We sent word up to the barracks to prepare the scenery and jumped into our regulation uniforms as though someone had sounded a fire drill.

Ten minutes later the Lieutenant met the Colonel, with his reviewing party, in the open square. By the time they moved down toward our camp everything was ready. Two mechanics were working over two cars, three men were chopping wood, one fellow was drawing water from the well, and the kitchen just humming with activity. The yard was swept clean and upstairs the barracks were neat as a pin.

When the Colonel made his entrance

everyone jumped to attention. Even our cook straightened up and executed something that might be called a salute. We must have looked like soldiers to the Chief, for he was all smiles. He shook hands with some of the men and left before he had a chance to find out different.

And we promptly took off our military manners and became human beings again. Maybe the early morning surprise was for the best. If we had known the inspection was coming off, it would have taken us four days to get ready for that moment's glance.

It's dinner time now and I'll save the rest for another day. We are having corking good meals presided over by a French chef. He is really a driver for the French Lieutenant, but even the F. L. admitted that he'd be more use in front of a kitchen range than behind the wheel of a flivver.

He cooks for five of us: the two lieutenants, the Marshal de Loge, the interpreter and myself. We've hired a kitchen for him and gather there three times a day for the feasts.

Otherwise everything, including the weather, is rotten.

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Saturday, December 15

DEAR FAMILY:

THIS is another of those red letter days in the army. You couldn't find a downhearted soul in the section, from the cook to the lieutenant. It has been pay day and mail day; which, if you reflect, is a combination of cheerfulness which never occurs in civilian life.

I have just been up in the barracks — to sell that cigarette-making machine I bought unwisely the other day — and it was as gay a scene as though peace had been declared. Every corner had its crap game, and two highly populated poker games ornamented the center of the room. Joy just bubbled everywhere.

I had more than my share of letters and am as happy as a boy on Christmas morning. There were six of your letters, the

latest November 14, with the pictures, Mrs. Watkins' wristlets, and the razor blades.

Clearwater sounds just like Paradise. Do enjoy it and have as gay a winter as you can, without being lonesome. I may be a long way off, but my part in the war is so very small it is hardly worth mentioning. We have been with the French army now for three months and all but ten of those days I have been as safe as playing golf at Belleair, and that seems about a fair proportion of work in this service.

At present we are 40 K.'s from the firing line and we may be here for weeks. We can hear the firing plainly enough, catch a glimpse of an observation balloon off in the clouds, and follow the *avions* for a while as they sail off for patrol duty. An occasional artillery train passing leisurely, the big, lumbering supply trucks, or the fast staff cars speeding through are the only evidences of war in this sleepy little village.

The only time I get blue is when I think of staying off here for an indefinite period, when I can't see any end to the awful mess.

But there must be an end! Germany can't hold out forever, and the Allies are too jolly well sick of militarism to seek terrible vengeance when she is ready to give in. The sufferings of an invaded country are too frightful to continue for a moment when once a conclusion is possible. In my optimistic moments — and they come frequently — I expect to be home in the summer. And then I'll be glad I came and saw it all. Back in America, I had just the vaguest idea of warfare. There is lots I have missed, but I've seen enough to fit in the missing parts. I'd like to see them go over the top from some nice safe club window, but I can't get up much enthusiasm for taking part in any such barbaric doings. I think I'll be happier when the service flag is pulled down and you are gathered around the mantelpiece displaying my golf cup to the Sunday afternoon visitors.

The Harbor Oaks pictures are corking, especially the one of Simpson's dock. In yesterday's letter I wrote asking for pictures. Our house certainly looks attractive. I've

shown everyone that would be shown just where my windows were, which was the grapefruit tree, and where I would be this minute if I were there.

I'm glad you sent the Christmas boxes via the French address. They are much surer to arrive in time. Now I have an official address to give you which I'll promise won't be changed for at least a week. It reads:

TORREY FORD,
S. S. U. 56
Convois Automobiles
A. E. F., France.
Par B. C. M.

That gives us the mailing privileges of the Expeditionary Forces and also lets the French government handle our mail at the Bureau Centrale Militaire. If I was a lieutenant or even a corporal you might prefix my name with the rank — but since I'm just a private, let's forget all about it.

I had the opportunity to advance to even such an exalted position as Sergeant, but

preferred to remain as I am until General Pershing discovers me and calls me to his staff. Being driver, companion, and nurse to the Lieutenant is quite as agreeable a place as I could ask. The joys of being a non-com. have no appeal for me.

Ted Wall and I are planning to take our ten-day permission during the holidays. Probably we shall start off for Nice a week from Monday. It sounds good, especially the golf course there.

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Tuesday, December 18

DEAR FAMILY:

THIS is the day I have been dreading ever since the very first hour I enlisted in the army. And now it has come, it isn't quite as terrible as I had pictured it.

We played bridge late last night. When the others were going home, something after midnight, they called to us from the gate to come out and look. We went out. It was coming down in small flakes, driven by a fierce north wind. I heard it howl through



the night and I didn't care if morning never came.

I postponed opening the shutters today until it wasn't respectable to stay in bed any longer, and then I looked out. There is only an inch or so of snow on the ground on the level, but it is winter all right.

I found the tonneau of my car full of the white stuff, the radiator and mud guards banked with it. But from the kitchen I got a pail of boiling water to fill the radiator and had her going in five minutes.

We drove over to town and found it very Christmassy, all the store windows decorated with Santa Clauses and toys. I could almost feel that I was in America. Had a corking luncheon with the French captain, was barbered and shaved, and then home to build a fire in our own grate.

There was more mail. If it could only continue this way, I'd never suspect there was an ocean between us. Four letters from home as late as November 23, and Doc's picture of the service flag. I do enjoy getting pictures — things look so good at home.

Am going off on permission maybe the end of this week.

I'd give anything to see the Home Guards in action on Cleveland Street. I live right in a mass of soldiers and yet have to see even a five-minute drill. All they require

of the French soldiers is to do their own particular job. Back in the French training schools, where the younger classes are getting ready, there is lots of drilling, of course.

Am now wearing big wooden shoes — *à la* the Dutch — provided by the French government. It's great to carry your own flooring when the ground is so cold.

. . .

Grand Hotel, Paris

December 26

DEAR FAMILY:

I AM tickled to pieces to be writing you from a regular place, so you can glance at the top and know just where I was for the moment. Yesterday, Christmas Day, our leaves came through and we started joyously forth. With the Lieutenant, Teddy Wall and I drove to Troyes, where we had a glorious Christmas dinner. It wasn't much like other Christmases, but we felt very lucky under the circumstances. Teddy and I took the four o'clock train for Paris and

got here in time for another Christmas dinner at Maxim's. Lieutenant Moore felt pretty badly that he couldn't come, too, but being an officer has some drawbacks.

We came here to the Grand Hotel, chartered a big room and bath, and feel like kings. Most of today we have spent scurrying around from one military office to another, getting our permissions viséed, and our transportation.

We had planned on Nice, but the military travel in that direction is so heavy that we had to make another choice. We picked Biarritz, down close to Spain on the Bay of Biscay, because everyone told us the golf there was the best. We leave tonight at 8.25 — reservations all made — and expect to stay on for ten days if we like it.

It certainly is swell to forget you are a soldier for a few minutes and chase off for a good time. If Clearwater were anywhere on this side of the ocean, I'd be starting for there tonight.

Back at camp we made quite a little of Christmas in spite of the blooming war.

We had a "company" Christmas eve dinner and a bridge game that lasted until 2 A.M. Only a few of the Christmas packages had come through, and I was lucky to get just one of mine. It was No. 2 that Hazel sent. It came on Christmas eve and I had great fun opening it. Of course, I missed the Christmas Day mail, but it will all be there for me when I get back to the section. Joe Lincoln sent me two boxes of Havana cigars that came two days before Christmas.

The military post offices have been so swamped with the package mail that everything has been held up. I went into the B. C. M. today and saw stacks of it ready to go out to the front.

It has been a week since I've written but I've been on the jump every minute. A week ago today we were playing bridge about 3.30 in the afternoon when a message came for us to move immediately. It was dark before we could get packed up, but we drove fifty miles after dark with every car checking in at the finish. We picked up a division back in the interior, some

seventy miles back of the lines and have promise of *restez-là*-ing there for considerable time.

No time now for more than this. *Nous partirons tout de suite!*

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December 28

Hotel Victoria, Biarritz, France

DEAR FAMILY:

I'M nearer America today than for many months, and farther away from being a soldier, too. The Atlantic Ocean is pounding in right out in front of my window and it feels kind of homelike.

If you could see where we are and how we are fixed, you'd certainly take back all your pities for the boys "over there."

Biarritz is wonderful! It is an all-the-year-around resort, though this is the dull season. We struck it in the midst of a wintry storm yesterday noon, the surf breaking high over the cliffs, and off in the distance, Spain, with the snow-peaked Pyr-

enees rising one above the other. There is some snow here and the temperature down nearly to freezing, but they tell us it will be warmer in a couple of days.

On the train yesterday we made friends with a young French soldier, who was convalescing from some bad wounds. He was coming to Biarritz, too. He took us under his wing to find a place for us. There are so many hotels here, wonderful big ones, that we never could have found the right one, with proper prices. He brought us here to the Victoria, found an enormous room, with three windows on the ocean. You couldn't find as nice a hotel in America — such efficient, polite servants, from the woman who comes in at *buit heures* to make a fire, to the English door man who has put his French at our disposal. Our room is luxurious — so much so that we can't feel at home after the shacks and barns we've been sleeping in. Breakfast — the usual Continental affair — is served in the room. The other two meals are treats. All this we get for eighteen francs apiece per

day, which means something around twenty-two dollars a week.

Here I think we can spend most of our ten days' leave and enjoy every minute. We are quite away from all military life. It isn't gay here now, but there are enough people not to make us feel lonesome.

This afternoon we walked out to the Golf Club. An Englishman, the secretary, was very cordial. He was all huddled up in a corner and said he had never seen such cold weather here. The course is in condition and as soon as the snow thaws off we are to play.

There are beautiful homes, castles, and hotels all about. Sand beaches and cliffs. It is a rendezvous for Spanish royalty, also for the English and French in the proper season.

How you would enjoy it all! Our soldier friend is staying here, too, and we see much of him. He dresses so perfectly and is so effeminate, I can't imagine his ever being up here in the infantry. But he has a great big wound to prove it and decorations

for bravery. He is only twenty-one and has been in for two years and a half.

I'll send some postals of the place — but you'd have to be here to know how wonderful it is.

They are waiting for me to go down town now — for coffee and cordial in one of the cafés.

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BIARRITZ, *Sunday, December 30*

DEAR FAMILY:

LISTEN to my Sunday and see if you think, after all, that war is as bad as Sherman suggested.

Along about 9.15 I woke up, Teddy still snoring lightly in the next bed. By my elbow there is a bell. I push it gently and duck down under the covers again.

Tout de suite, Dixon, the gray-haired maid, steals into the room. She passes over to the windows, opens the shutters, pulls back the portières, and floods our pink chamber with stage sunshine.

Teddy wakes up with a start and wants

to know "what'ell" just as Dixon asks *Comment désirez-vous*, M'sieu? As Teddy wears a sleeveless gray sweater over his sleeveless undershirt — his only pajamas being deep down in his barracks bag back in camp — he dives back under the sheets quite embarrassed, while I order breakfast.

Quickly comes in the valet, with our boots and puttees, all highly polished. After *Bon jour*-ing us and lighting our cigarettes, he makes a crackling fire in the open fireplace. Breakfast arrives and is placed between our beds.

By 10.15 I suggest that we jump into our clothes and go down to the 11 o'clock service in the English church. Teddy can't understand my religious streak at all, and I rather hesitate to tell him that by going we may establish ourselves socially in Biarritz as being the only American soldiers that ever went to church.

Anyway, we go. The church is beastly cold and there aren't many people there. The rector smokes when he chants the psalm and we all smoke when we mumble

the response. It is a pleasure to hear English, though.

We fish around in our pockets for a franc when the offertory begins. We make it two apiece when we see the dignified old Englishman in the fur coat approach with his pan.

He stops, curiously, by us, and we recognize him as our friend, Mr. Corry, secretary of the golf club. He is asking us to come to the club for tea at four. We mumble an acceptance and go on with the offertory hymn. Teddy begins to suspect my religious streak but marvels at my wisdom.

Church is over quickly, the rector apologizing for the cold and promising heat for next Sunday. Coming out, one or two people stop us—but we've one invitation



and hurry on. We promenade along the sea until luncheon time. It's clear and cold, but the sea looks very homelike.

We have luncheon with Roger Bernard, our French soldier friend, who has lately proved to be the son of a Count. He has been to church, too, for he's a Catholic.

From two to four we promenade again. There are many people out, for the sun is warmer. Several English people speak to us kindly. Two little French girls snap a camera as we pass.

Suddenly, a sharp explosion floats in from the sea. Everyone gets excited. They gather in little groups and point off to where a patrol boat has exploded a floating mine. An airplane buzzes off from shore to see what's happening. Even way off here, it seems, we are not quite away from the war.

Then we go back to the room and prepare for our tea. That isn't much of a ceremony, as we have only our uniforms to wear. But we shave and wash and try to look acceptable.

On the way up the hill Teddy confesses that he hates teas. I, too, and we decide to get it over with quickly.

Mr. Corry, in his golfing rig, meets us at the door, and carries us in in a whirl of good nature. In the café we approach a large table covered with sweets. Mrs. Corry, a sweet-tempered old lady, presides. She does some casual introducing and waves us to seats about the table.

There is a gushy lady who proclaims proudly that she hails from Kentucky; an English captain who proves himself a lord in civilian life; also, a Mrs. Brooks — English — her charming daughter, Marjorie, and several little Brooks.

There is nothing formal about the affair. We all pitch into the sweets and talk with almost anyone. I am getting on famously with the Kentucky lady. Her friend's son was in my class at Harvard. Will I take luncheon with her on Wednesday? No! Well, then, tea on Monday afternoon.

There is a sudden lull in the conversation on our side of the board and we hear the

Captain telling what a fine fellow is the Prince of Wales. Instantly, we all subside and listen. The Captain realizes he has the floor and raises his voice a bit. It goes some thing like this:

"He is a fine fellow, the Prince, now that he's on his own. I've found him often down in my harness early morning."

The Kentucky lady applauds and opines that the Prince has "such a fine face."

The Captain continues: "I remember once when some General over in the Somme came into headquarters looking for another General. He'd been jolly well looking for him all day and couldn't find him. The Baron and I were just coming in from a game of polo out in the mud behind the lines. The Baron's leather coat was thrown open and he perspired freely.

"The General asked us if we had seen the General. Mind you, we'd been out playing polo and of course we hadn't seen the General. But the General was so put out he did a frightful blow. When he's through cursing, he passed on out you know.

“And right there, the Prince stepped out from behind a screen! He’d heard it all!

“‘What a damned old rotter’ he said, — and then let out a string of oaths that fairly outdid the General.”

Of course, we all laughed heartily. The Kentucky lady thought the Prince must be a corker to outcurse the General.

Then the talk drifted to the Queen of Spain, to what Duke So-and-So said about nothing.

I didn’t know whether to laugh, cry, or run away. But we held tight and heard the Kentuckian tell how “our greatest American, Robert E. Lee,” had been wild in his youth.

When we adjourned to the living room fire I cornered Marjorie and buzzed her busily. Such a nice English family she belongs to! They’ve lived in Mexico for years and have been here for only thirteen months. She’s to be at the tea tomorrow, too. We walked home with the Brooks’s, all of them. Mrs. Brooks asks us for tea next Saturday — if our money holds out that long.

Ted and I begin dinner alone and are soon joined by Roger. He has found a Countess down town and has a rendezvous for the three of us at the Royalty Café after dinner. She becomes very charming in spite of my bad French.

"There is so much bad French in Biarritz in season," she says.

I want her to dance with me, but she has "given over dancing for the war." We have coffee and cordial and listen to the music. And about ten o'clock we drift back to the hotel "and so to bed."

. . .

PARIS, *January 7, 1918*

DEAR FAMILY:

I feel like a regular soldier today, for here I am back in Paris at a hotel, run by the Y. M. C. A. It is a rather neat affair, and most thickly populated with soldiers and sailors. We came here both for economy and the experience.

After a strenuous night in a second-class

compartment coming up from Biarritz, we arrived about 9 this morning in a drenching rain. The French certainly stand a great many discomforts in their travelling. Their diners have ours beat a mile, but right there the superiority stops.

We weren't crowded in our compartment. There were two vacant seats. I used them both, one for my head, one for my feet, and the rest of me in my own seat. The other passengers contented themselves with one seat. They all snored industriously while I kept guard until morning came. Teddy also writhed in his seat and occasionally we broke the long hours by going out for a smoke.'

Our last few days at Biarritz were delightful. It finally warmed up, and the day we left the golf greens had shown above the snow and were about ready for play. Another permission and we will try them out.

We had tea again with the Corry's at the country club. Mrs. Corry took our pictures and promised to forward them to

America. Saturday was the real treat. We had tea with the Brooks. They are such a polite, well-bred family, from the 7-year-old youngster to the mother. They had invited the junior members of most of the



English families in the neighborhood, about 20 in all. We played games, many games—from charades to riding in an airplane. I enjoyed it all immensely. Sunday we had a final tea with the Kentucky lady, and made a break for our hotel.

When we passed down the stairs on our way out, the servants were lined up just as I have seen in musical comedies. First there was the chamber maid, two valets,

two waiters, the concière and the elevator boy. We fed them and got away with our lives.

Tonight we've been asked to dinner with a nice man who came up from Biarritz on the same train. We had played cards with him at the Victoria. Now for the cinema.

. . .

PARIS, *January 15*

DEAR FAMILY:

I'm not back at camp yet. This time I'm in a hospital—just to add to my list of experiences, a war hospital. Off on permission, I caught a peach of a cold and Lieutenant Moore thought I hadn't better come back into service until I had entirely shaken it.

Here I've been for nearly a week, in and out of bed, and really not sick at all. It's been rather luxurious, for I've had no fever and been on the full, regular diet. It is an American hospital, with cheerful American Red Cross nurses, American doctors and all American patients. Haven't seen

so many Americans since I left home. Probably they won't let me stay here more than a couple of days longer because my cold has quite disappeared and I am quite fit again.

Isn't it funny that all the while out there in service I was always so well — and then I have a furlough, have some of the comforts of home life and immediately catch cold. About the only reason I want to get back is to find the mail. Since Christmas, I haven't had a line, of course, and then there are my Christmas boxes to get back to. By the way these peace moves are flying around, I'll have to hurry back to see any of the war at all.

Life in the hospital is just as gloriously lazy as usual. If they are all like this one, the boys who get laid up will see the best part of France. There are three other boys in my room — from Brooklyn, Toledo and East Aurora. The Roycrofter has been here two months with a bad knee. He was wounded in October, while serving his country bravely in a football game somewhere behind the range of the big guns.

There is a victrola outside the door now, playing some good American airs that I haven't heard for many months. Smoking is allowed, even encouraged, the nurses coming round with cigarettes often enough.

I forgot to write that the copy of *Every Week*, with "Torchy's" visit to Allentown reached camp just before I left. It passed around the section and all the boys were greatly pleased. I am trying to get something written but am having considerable difficulty in settling down to it.

I have only run into a couple of fellows I knew. It's funny, with so many that must be over here. There is a nurse here from Tampa, by the name of Miss Gunby. She knows Dale Mayberry and said he was over here somewhere. A big strapping fellow from Arcadia came in to swap Cracker gossip yesterday. He had about the same longing for Florida sunshine that I have.

It's nice to be missing these worst weeks of the winter. The past day or two it has softened a bit and I expect there won't be

much more severe weather. They are not supposed to have winters over here, according to the natives.

If we find this old war is going to last forever, you will all have to get passports some way or other and come over and *restez-là* in Biarritz. I looked over a dozen chateaux around the golf links and on the shore. There are any number of attractive places for rent. I found one corker for \$875 per year, completely furnished, with linen and silver. Another for \$1500 was a regular palace, most wonderfully furnished. Anyway, after the war, you will have to spend a season there. You can get three servants for the price of one in America. I was crazy about the whole place and I know you would all be.

The rest of France I've seen, I never want to see again, not even their wonderful Paris. It's too foreign. If this war does nothing else, it is teaching some million men to love the little old U. S. A. And I'm one of the million, you bet.

PARIS, *January 23*

DEAR FAMILY:

I don't suppose one should complain at spending the worst of a war winter in the shelter of a nice, warmly-heated hospital — but I can't quite figure it. For the past 10 days I've been as fit as a fiddle, but still no one says anything about sending me away — and I never murmur a word. I guess they want to make pretty darned sure a man is hardened again before they let him go back into it. And, besides, in the American military hospitals they have a tremendous force of doctors and nurses with only a scattering of patients.

Our days are mostly the same — checkers and food. Occasionally, one of these Red Cross ladies, with more charity than sense, pays us a visit. Today one came with an apple for each of us, accompanied with a glowing tale of how she was sacrificing everything to win the war. Already, she has given her all — her husband — who is

holding down a desk as major in the frightfully dangerous Quartermaster's Corps. And if worse comes to worst, she will even move to a less expensive hotel. Most of



these Frenchized Americans, who have been living over here a dozen years, are *pas bon*.

I've been revelling in some New York *Tribunes* a fellow brought up from Brentano's — dating Dec. 25 and 26. There seems to be a grand debate as to who is to fill Heywood Broun's shoes. The person

who signs "S. S." is none other than Salita Solano, my predecessor on the *Traveler*. Perhaps I won't be glad to get back and into the game.

Gee, I am anxious to get my mail! But I'll be leaving here too soon to have it sent on.

• •

PARIS, *January 29*

DEAR FAMILY:

Still living in luxury and growing lazy by the day. I get out every day from 12 to 5 — which makes it rather pleasant being right here in Paris. Today I sent you a cable. They say nothing about discharging me from the hospital, so I keep mum and enjoy myself. They let the fellows go who are stationed here in Paris, but men bound for the front they hold forever.

It's a jolly crowd here, and we pass the time congenially. I discovered a fellow serving in the French aviation who played

in the Florida State Golf Championship the year it was held in Jacksonville.

Our prize acquisition is "Red" Harris, the boy trumpeter. He's 19 years old and has seen five years of service in the marine corps. Sometimes he approaches "Torchy" in red-head philosophy. His present job is to blow "taps" at all the American military funerals.

He blew taps when his ship left Philadelphia, and spent 5 days in the brig for it. Arriving in France, he met a little French girl and forgot all about drills and the war. Another 30 days in the brig. Encore when he arrived in Paris. Altogether he has 31 court martials on his service record and can look back on 5 years, mostly spent in the brig. But "Red" smiles and is indispensable to his company.

He'd been in bed some six days when an orderly came in to report that Harris was wanted in the adjutant's office.

"Somebody's dead," says "Red," jumping up and grabbing his clothes.

Somebody was, too, and there wasn't

anyone but "Red" who could blow taps well enough to bury him. He was back in bed that evening, observing, as usual:

"You gotter use your head in this outfit."

He'd developed a limp somewhere between bed and the funeral and had ridden to the cemetery in the Major's twin-six.

Then we have many visits from Red Cross and Y. M. C. A. adherents. Sunday they came in flocks, bearing roses and candy. I got an extra rose because I came from N. J. — and an extra piece of candy from a fat girl because she came from Dalton, Mass. Then there was — "My name's Brown, from Ohio," who assured me Times Square was still doing business.

But we enjoy their visits, even if they aren't quite sure of their grounds in administering to the sick.

How I am looking forward to that batch of mail back at camp!

PARIS, *February 7*

DEAR FAMILY:

At last I've had word of you and perhaps it wasn't "a grand and gloryus feelin'." One of the fellows came in from the section and brought me a stack of 50 letters. From you, there were some as late as Jan. 1. It was just like discovering you had a family again after two months on a desert island. Also heard the packages are stacked up waiting for me. Perhaps I won't have a grand Christmas party. For me, I've been operated on, a minor operation, not the least bit serious. They discovered I needed to have it done while I was here in the hospital—and as I would have to be operated on sometime later in civilian life, I told them to go to it. Dr. Blake, a famous New York physician, performed the operation and everything has been going finely since.

I never knew I had "it" until being examined for the army, when I traced it

back to a blow I got horseback riding last spring. They weren't going to accept me until I promised to have an operation after getting to Allentown. But nothing was said there and I let it go on. I am glad to have it over with. The ether was disagreeable but the pain amounted to nothing. They will give me two or three weeks to rest before I go back to join the boys.

The Lieutenant writes that they are in a sector where they have "war de luxe" — fine quarters, beautiful roads, and no shooting. He is coming in on leave soon and we may go off somewhere for a few days. I can't be sorry to be missing it until the real spring sets in. I'd write oftener but there is so little to be said from the inside of a hospital. We have a great bunch of checker-playing invalids here. The days pass quickly and each one brings peace nearer — no matter how dark the papers may make things look.

PARIS, *February 13*

DEAR FAMILY:

My letters written here from the hospital must be infrequent and brief, because there isn't one thing to write about except when a new patient enters our little room.

This time it is a 45-year-old Methodist minister from Rockland, Maine. He is taking a slight furlough from his Y. M. C. A. services while he has something or other cut out. Rather a change from "Red" Harris. But we have a good time hooting his ideas on low-necks, dancing, cards and rum. His troubles are more painful than the rest of ours are. We even curse for him when the best he can get out is "Cracky!"

By this time you'll think I'm a bed-ridden invalid, and that I surely must be stretching the truth when I tell you my sickness is neither dreadful nor serious. But the doctor said it would be two or three weeks before he would think of sending me back into service. I am still on my back but contented to let things run along slowly.

We certainly do get constant and efficient care.

The doctors, a whole slew of them, while not so conversational as in civilian life, are more attentive and careful than if they were working for money. For if they are captains, they are eager to be majors, and the majors want to be colonels and so on up the line.

We have a bunch of new nurses just in from the States. They go in for war nursing with as much enthusiasm as though we were all just out of the trenches. Somehow people just over and those at home seem to think that any place in France is the front.

I read Wilson's reply to the Boche in today's paper, and have a sneaking suspicion he will pull off a diplomatic victory some of these days if the armies don't make more speed in downing the Hun.

I wish I could remember more of Mr. Fairley's sermons. It would come in handy in my daily combats with the parson.

PARIS, *February 19*

DEAR FAMILY:

Well, I guess I'm pretty near ready to go back to war. My incision is all healed, the dressings are off, and they let me get up today. I walked the length of the hall in a sort of drunken reel. Whether I will stay here in the hospital until I get all my strength back or go somewhere to convalesce hasn't been decided yet.

Lieutenant Moor surprised me by blowing into the room yesterday. He is in on a 10-day permission and said one of his chief jobs is to get me back on my feet to go home with him. Probably I will be ready by then and he will make things easy for me at camp. He says he has a fine bedroom to share with me and that we have a new French chef who is a corker. I certainly was glad to see him again. Today he is going to bring me out a pack of mail. Also there are 20 packages back at camp for me. Won't I have a grand and

glorious Christmas morning when I get back!

I guess you can get used to war the same as anything else, unless you have to go into the trenches and get shot.

I read about the January Belleair tournament in the New York *Tribune* and had a few qualms of homesickness. Didn't notice Pop's name among the semi-finalists but concluded he'd been too busy to compete.

I will honestly hate to leave this hospital. Everything has been so cheerful and pleasant and we have all had a bang-up time. It's a whole floor of surgical cases, so there is no one really sick — a little pain here and there but no one with raging fevers. We can smoke, sing and make all the noise we like.

I am anxious to get my mail and find out how everything is going in Clearwater.

Did you know that "Torchy's" visit to Allentown was printed in the camp paper? I wondered if they had permission. If I had been back there I might have gotten a captain's commission on the strength of it.

The Expeditionary Forces have started a paper called *The Stars and Stripes*. Palmer, the war correspondent, is the boss of it. I wish he'd take me on.

Much love and keep cheerful even if peace does seem a long way off.

• •

PARIS, *February 22, 1918*

DEAR FAMILY:

This is my last night in the hospital and I honestly hate to go. But I have certainly made the most of a little thing — and now I have two weeks' convalescence (?) coming to me. They are sending me out in the country, which I can tell you more about after I get there tomorrow.

I've been out for a couple of days doing a few errands. Yesterday I sent a cable telling you of my address change. Just the section number. The rest peculiarly remains the same. No wonder our mail does queer things with their thinking up a new address for us every few days. Pos-

sibly they do it to confuse the Germans and make it impossible for anyone ever to locate us.

I've had another batch of mail and am with you up to date of the 16th of January—which seems quite recent considering how things have been going.

. . .

CHANTILLY, *Sunday, February 24*

Well, I am in clover now. There may be a war somewhere in France but I don't know anything about it.

To go back and tell you how it all happened. I left the hospital with many regrets yesterday. I went over to headquarters and received orders to proceed to Chantilly (Oise) for ten days' convalescence. I felt pretty dubious about things. Met Lieutenant Moore for luncheon and tried to stall off going—a convalescent home didn't sound good to me. But he said I had better make the most of an opportunity to take the rest.

So I took the 5:04 train out of Paris, and arrived about 6, and took a cab to the Shepards'. It was dark and the train looked gloomy. Finally we pulled up in front of a rather pretentious chateau and I stumbled up to the door.

A white-capped maid ushered me into the hall and called to some one off stage. A merry feminine voice called back: "Come on right in."

I certainly was surprised when I stepped into a gorgeous living room, with 10 fellows sitting round in luxurious comfort. And in the midst of them was Mrs. Elliott Findley Shepard — of the well-known American family — and her pretty young sister. Five of the fellows I had known at the hospital. They all welcomed me, just as though it was a house-party of old friends and I the long-expected guest.

And then I began to find out things. It seems that Mr. and Mrs. Shepard have offered the hospitality of their home to any 12 ambulance men who need a rest. They take you right into the family and

entertain you just as they would the Duke of Normandy.

First: the meals — Banquets, the boys call them.

Recreations — you do whatever you please when you please. Breakfast is a bath-robe affair, so you can go back to bed and sleep until noon.

This afternoon, the golfers started for the Country Club soon after luncheon. I asked no questions and followed along. And there was *a* course! Ask Mr. Wright about the course at Chantilly, one of the best in France. Mr. Shepard is a director of it and has had the club opened and the course kept up just for his 10 convalescents.

I started out in a foursome with Mr. Shepard and two others. I counted on playing about two holes, then trailing back to the club-house to recuperate. After my first drive sailed down over the beautiful fairway, I allowed I might keep on until the fourth. I wound up by dropping my last putt on the 7th for a 5 — and perhaps I don't feel like a different man tonight.

I feel just as though I had left the army forever and were back home again.

And to think that I am to have 10 days



of it! It just seems too wonderful to be true.

We got back here in time for tea and now the boys are distributed about the house — a bridge game going on, the pianola with

ukelele accompaniment at my right — and a corn-popping match in the kitchen with the pretty sister.

Mr. and Mrs. Shepard are the kind of people everyone would like. They make you feel that their kindness is just something you deserve — nothing patronizing nor the least bit charitable. The house is full of servants, but Mrs. Shepard rustles around and sees that things are done. Last night she showed me to my room, ran upstairs for a pair of pajamas and slippers and made sure that I had enough blankets.

And the boys here — I don't know how they picked them out, but they are a fine crowd. I imagine the Captain at headquarters, who sends the convalescent ambulance men to various points, sort of uses his head in the sending. I am sharing a bedroom with two sons of old Eli. Then there are boys from California and all over the map. I can't wait to get back to the Section to tell the boys what they missed by not having an operation.

After I have looked around town a bit,

I'll write you more about the race-track, the Duke's chateau, etc. But ask Mr. Wright about it. He has probably been here and can fill in the scenery for you.

Anyway — you'll know I am in clover. It would take home and America to beat this. To play golf again — it's like waking up after a bad dream.

There hasn't been much I've experienced in France that I'd care to share with you — but I wish you were all here to spend these next ten days with me.

War has its ups and downs, after all!

• • •

The Elliott F. Shepard Convalescent Home.

CHANTILLY (Oise), February 27

DEAR FAMILY:

The above is certainly a forbidding-looking title for our homelike little house-party. It all gets better and more wonderful each day — and I grow more into an ordinary, contented, golf-playing civilian. Yesterday afternoon my swing suddenly came back to

me on the first tee and I came trudging home to tea with 9 francs in my pockets, accompanied by a Southern boy from Pinehurst who swore he was through with golf for life. But during the night he discovered what was the matter with his game and is signed for a foursome *après le déjeuner*.

The Shepards become more and more agreeable on further acquaintance and I'd be quite content to *rester là* for the duration of the war. And a week from today I'll be packing my bag and speeding toward Alsace — but after a week of this I should be ready to go back.

Bridge, golf, laziness and banquet meals is our whole program. And the weather is curiously perfect. Yesterday, with the sun boiling down, I could almost believe that I was out on the Belleair links. The temperature may have been in the 50's but it felt like 72 degrees to me. Mr. Shepard has a wonderful collection of war pictures. Marshal Joffre had his headquarters here for 22 months and received all the allied heads, from the king of Belgium to

Kitchener, with Mr. Shepard close by with his camera all the while. He also knows Pershing and has some rare pictures of the arrival of the first Americans in France. War pictures that will interest a soldier are some pictures. Of course, he took my picture, which I shall send anon.

The bell just tinkled for luncheon, so I will have to save more until later.

. . .

CHANTILLY, *March 4*

DEAR FAMILY:

Winter came back on us suddenly Friday afternoon, right in the middle of a glorious sixsome. There has been a little snow falling ever since, but it hardly rests on the ground before it melts. Driven from the links, we have been having almost as good a time with bridge. We've had one or two tables going at all times and the daily score is bulletined in the hall. I hated to give up the golf because my game was coming back daily and I enjoyed every shot. Maybe I'll

get in a last game tomorrow afternoon, for Wednesday I'm due to rejoin the colors.



And I certainly am physically fit, thanks to golf.

Saturday night we had a party. Dinner at the hotel and a dance afterwards at the house, with the American canteen furnishing as many of their girls as were of eligible

age. There were five of them, to be exact, to divide up among twelve of us. But we had a good time, almost an American evening.

It's too bad there aren't more American families in France, so every soldier could have an occasional week of home-life. You can't know what it means after nine months of the gypsy life. This has my 10 days in Biarritz beaten every way. Imagine American meals here in France! Meat, potatoes and vegetables all on the same plate at one time, desert coming where it should and coffee following in the living room in regular civilized fashion.

I really am rather eager to get back to the section to see the boys, get my mail, have my Christmas and find out how the war is going on. They are in a nice, quiet sector where nothing ever happens. Probably by the time I get back they will be going back for another *repos*. It's not much of the war I've seen — nearly 7 months in France and only one month in the zone of fire. But I'd be the last one to kick.

Back of the lines is just as interesting and lots more comfortable.

Will you write a note to Mr. or Mrs. Shepard thanking them for taking me. They have been so nice.

∴

NANCY, *March 7, 1918*

DEAR FAMILY:

It certainly is funny to wander around France by my lonesome after being led by the nose for all these months. I'm indulging in the mysterious game of hunting for the boys. I'm bound to win in time, of course — but at present I'm two days out from post and still a good 100 kilometres from anyone I know.

I said a tearful farewell to the Shepards yesterday and went into Paris to headquarters for my orders. Spent the night in Paris and left on the 8 o'clock train this morning. Had a good luncheon on the train and rather enjoyed the trip. Saw Irvin Cobb coiled up asleep when I passed through

to the diner. He got off at one of the American camps.

We were an hour and a half late coming into Nancy, so, of course, I missed my connection for the south bound train, and the lady at the window says the next train leaves *demain*. So I came up here to a very decent hotel, and have been out viewing what the Boche bombs have accomplished lately. It would have been a pretty town if they hadn't messed it up so.

Dinner will be ready in a few minutes — and then I'm going to make an early dive for bed to be ready to respond to a 6:15 call in the morning to catch a 7:15 train. It should be an interesting trip down through the Vosges, but I would much prefer to have a travelling companion.

This pen is so bad that I can't write anything but bare facts. Am feeling fine. Hope this spring weather continues.

P.S. Next year, I hope to be celebrating Pop's birthday in quite another way.

March 11

DEAR FAMILY:

Here I am back at the front and indulging in all the luxuries of war de luxe. Honestly you couldn't believe it unless you were here to see for yourself.

I got here Saturday noon, after a wonderful early morning drive through the mountains, and winding up with an hour's ride in a box car of an electric tramway. At the end of the line I got off. It was a sleepy little town, jammed with soldiers and a few civilians. And the most wonderful spring-like day I've seen since last September. I trudged down the road with my suitcase, and around the first corner ran into an American baseball game. I knew I was home at last.

The game broke up while I tried to explain to the boys how I'd managed to keep away for two months and a half. Then I had luncheon with the Lieutenant and afterward he showed me around the camp.

We are billeted over some half a mile, but everyone is very comfortable. The main building is where the office, dining room, kitchen and garage are located, with baseball field adjoining and the football field to your right. The boys are divided up into the "chateau crowd," the "factory gang," and the "lofters," according to the particular locality of their bunks.

Then we went to the Lieutenant's room, where my bed was waiting for me — a great big room in an old house, occupied by a pleasant French woman and her children. It might seem like poverty if you had to live in the room in America, but here it is luxury. The woman brings in hot bricks every night for our beds — all, mind you, within four miles of the German lines.

After I'd seen everything, I had my mail and my Christmas. And perhaps it wasn't some Christmas. I think almost everything that should have arrived was here — the boxes that Hazel packed and those you sent.

There were so many things that I am quite too excited to tell you how much I

appreciated each one. I have a larder of eatables and smokes that will make it seem as though I was living right next to Stewart's for the next couple of months. If you could only have included a couple of chocolate "sinks," the penalties of being at war would amount to practically nil.

The allotment of socks waiting for me fills, as the *News* would say, a long-felt want. I've worn and reworn the two pairs I started out with until they were about through. And I was glad to come back to a new razor after hacking my face with my old tools.

And what package do you think blew in today — the long-lost one you sent to Allentown August 7. It was none the worse for the 7 months' trip and everything in it came in very handy. I am what you might call long on sweaters just at present — but there will be many days when I can put on all 8 of them and be happy.

You have been so good to me that there isn't a thing in the world I need — except, and always, Fatimas.

Over here, I can buy all the toilet articles that are necessary for my health and consistent with my station.

You might look through my trunk and find a couple of soft white shirts and two suits of B. V. D.'s, for it will be summer before an answer to this can reach me.

We have had simply wonderful weather for the last four days — spring-like, with nice warm sunshine. Everyone is more contented and happy than at any time since we've been in the army.

And why shouldn't they be, with very light work and everything running smoothly? This front here is almost a joke — I'll have to save telling you about it until the next letter.

With loads of love,

TORREY

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